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A FOREWORD

If this, the seventeenth volume of the Annual Lesson Commentary, falls below the high standard set by previous volumes, the reader will graciously attribute its defects to the weakness of its author. He knows that the work is not perfect, but it is hoped that the sincere student will find the comments and suggestions helpful.

Topics for investigation and discussion may be profitably used in midweek prayer meetings and in teachers' meetings. This will help to stir up interest in the lessons, and will give the teachers a better background for their work. No scripture references are given with these topics, for every Bible student should do some research work for his own improvement.

Let the student pray, as did David, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

R. L. WHITESIDE.

LESSONS FOR 1938

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BIBLE DICTIONARY OF PROPER NAMES

Arranged and Compiled by H. LEO BOLES

A

- Aaron (bright or shining), Ex. 4: 14. Brother of Moses and first high priest.
Ab, Abba (father), Gal. 4: 6. Name given to God.
Abednego (servant of Nego), Dan. 1: 7. One of Daniel's companions.
Abel (breath, vanity), Gen. 4: 1. Second son of Adam.
Abiathar (father of abundance), 1 Sam. 23: 9. High priest and fourth in descent from Eli.
Abigail (father is joy), 1 Sam. 25: 14. Wife of Nabal; became David's wife.
Abimelech (Melech is father), Gen. 26: 1. King of Gerar in the time of Isaac.
Abishai (my father is Jesse), 1 Sam. 26: 6-9. The eldest of the three sons of Zeruiah, David's sister, and brother of Joab.
Abner (father is light), 1 Sam. 14: 50. King Solomon's captain.
Abraham, Abram (father of a multitude, exalted father), Gen. 12: 1. Founder of the Hebrews and father of the faithful.
Absalom (father is peace), 2 Sam. 15: 1. Third son of David.
Achaia (trouble), Acts 18: 12. A Roman province which included Greece.
Achan (trouble), Josh. 7: 19-26. Stole golden wedge, etc. Stoned by Joshua.
Adam (ruddy, one made or produced), Gen. 3: 15. Name of the first man.
Adonijah (my Lord is Jehovah), 2 Sam. 3: 4. Fourth son of David.
Agabus, Acts 11: 27. A Christian prophet who came from Jerusalem.
Agag, 1 Sam. 15: 8. Title of the king 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 of 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.
Ambassador (messenger or agent), 2 Cor. 5: 20. A person commissioned.
Amen (true), Isa. 65: 16. Close of prayer.
Amos (burden), Amos 1: 1. Minor prophet.
Amphipolis (a city surrounded by the sea), Acts 17: 1. A city of Macedonia, through which Paul and Silas passed on their way from Philippi to Thessalonica.
Amram (an exalted people), Ex. 6: 18. Father of Moses.
Ananias (Jehovah hath been gracious), Acts 5: 1. Husband of Sapphira, smitten dead.
Anathema (cursed), Gal. 1: 9. A word used by Paul to show condemnation.
Anise (dill), Matt. 23: 23. A small garden plant.
Anna (grace), Luke 2: 36. A prophetess at Jerusalem.
Annas (humble), Acts 4: 6. The son of Seth; was appointed high priest A.D. 7.
Antichrist (opposed to Christ), 1 John 2: 18. Only John uses this word as applied to the enemies of Christianity.
Antioch (from Antiochus), Acts 11: 20. City in Syria, also in Pisidia.
Apollonia (belonging to Apollo), Acts 17: 1. A city in Macedonia.
Apostle (one sent forth), Matt. 10: 2-4; 2 Cor. 8: 23. The official name of the twelve disciples sent out by Jesus.
Apphia (fruitful), Phile. 2. A Christian woman addressed jointly with Philemon.
Aquila (an eagle), Acts 18: 2. A Jew whom Paul found at Corinth, husband of Priscilla.
Archelaus (prince of the people), Matt. 2: 22. Son of Herod the Great.
Archippus (master of the horse), Col. 4: 17. A Christian teacher in Colosse.
Areopagus (Mars Hill), Acts 17: 22. The rocky heights in Athens, opposite the western end of the Acropolis.
Arimathea (height), Matt. 27: 57. A city of Judea.
Aristarchus (the best ruler), Acts 20: 4. A companion of Paul on his third missionary journey.
Asa (physician, healer), 2 Chron. 14: 8. Third king of Judea; reigned forty years.
Ashpenaz (horse-nose), Dan. 1: 3. Master of eunuchs.
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 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.
- Beelzebub** (Lord of the House), Matt. 12: 24. Title of heathen god.
- 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.
- Cesarea** (Kaisareia Caesar), Acts 8: 40. City on coast of Palestine.
- Cesarea Philippi** (from Caesar and Philip), Matt. 16: 13. City twenty miles north of the Sea of Galilee.
- Chemosh** (subduer), Num. 21: 29. A god of the Moabites.
- Chinnereth** (flute, 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 A.D. 41 to 54.
 Cleopas (from Cleopatra), John 19: 25. One of the two disciples to whom Jesus talked on the way to Emmaus.
 Corban, Matt. 15: 5. An offering to God.
 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 Caesarea.
 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.
 Demoniac, Matt. 12: 22. One possessing a demon.
 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.
 Diotrophes (nourished by Jove), 3 John 9. Nothing known of him.
 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.
 Doubter. One without faith.

E

- Easter (passover), Acts 12: 4. Translated "Passover" in the Revised Version.
 Ebal (stone), Deut. 11: 26-29. Mountain.
 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.
 Etam (lair of wild beasts), Judges 15: 8. Place visited by Samson.
 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.
 Euraiquo, 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.
 Gergesenes (See Gadarenes).
 Gethsemane (an oil press), Matt. 26: 36. Garden near Jerusalem.
 Gerizim (cutter), Deut. 11: 26-29. Mountain in Ephraim.
 Gibeah (a hill), Josh. 15: 57. Located in Benjamin.
 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.
 Gospel (good message), Rom. 1: 16. Good tidings of joy.
 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 the 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.
 Hazael (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 of 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, and 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 the 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** (weariest), Gen. 29: 16. Daughter of Laban, first wife of Jacob.
- Lebanon** (white), Deut. 1: 7. Mountain range north of Palestine.
- Lehi** (jawbone), Judges 15: 9. A place in Judah.
- 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 of Antioch.
- Luke** (light-giving), Acts 13: 1; Col. 4: 14. Traveled with Paul and wrote the book that bears his name.
- Lycaonia** (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.
- Lystra**, Acts 16: 1. One of the cities visited by Paul on his first and second missionary tours; home of Timothy.

M

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

- Magdalene** (inhabitant of Magadan), Matt. 27: 56. Mary Magdalene, present at crucifixion of Christ.
- Magi** (wise men), Matt. 2: 1-12. Those who visited the babe Jesus.
- Malachi** (my messenger), Author of the last book of the Old Testament.
- Malchus** (king, or kingdom), Matt. 26: 51. The name of the servant of the high priest whose right ear Peter cut off in the garden of Gethsemane.
- 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.
- Manoah** (rest), Judges 13: 2. Father of Samson.
- Mark**, Acts 12: 12. One of the evangelists and writer of the book that bears his name.
- Martha** (a lady), Luke 10:38. Sister of Lazarus and Mary.
- Mary** (a tear). A common name in the New Testament; mother of Jesus.
- Matthew** (gift of Jehovah), Matt. 10: 3. One of the twelve apostles and writer of the first book of the New Testament.
- Matthias** (gift of God), Acts 1: 26. The apostle elected to fill the place of the traitor, Judas.
- Melchizedek** (king of righteousness), Gen. 14: 18-20. King and priest of God; type of Christ as priest.
- 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.
- Mizpah** (a watchtower), Josh. 18: 26. A city in Benjamin.
- Moab** (of his father), Deut. 2: 11. Son of Lot by his eldest daughter.
- Molech** (king), Jer. 49: 1. The god of the Ammonites.
- Moriah** (chosen by Jehovah), Gen. 22: 2. The mount where Abraham offered Isaac.
- Moses** (drawn), Ex. 2: 5. The leader of God's people.
- Myrrh**, Ex. 30: 23. One of the ingredients of the oil of holy ointment.
- Mysia** (land of beech trees), Acts 16: 7. Region about the frontier of the provinces of Asia and Bithynia.

N

- Naaman** (pleasantness), 2 Kings 5: 18. Captain of the army of Syria; a leper, cleansed by Elisha.
- Nabal** (fool), 1 Sam. 25: 3. First husband of Abigail, one of David's wives.
- Naomi** (my delight), Ruth 1: 2. Wife of Elimelech and mother-in-law of Ruth.
- Naphtali** (wrestling), Gen. 30: 8. The fifth son of Jacob; son of Bilhah, one of Rachel's handmaids.
- Nathan** (a giver), 2 Sam. 7: 2. Name of the prophet who rebuked David.
- Nathaniel** (gift of God), John 1: 47. An early disciple of Jesus; some think the same as Bartholomew.
- Nazarene** (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 exposition from Babylon to Jerusalem.
- New Testament** (new covenant). Name given to the Holy Scriptures after the advent of Christ.
- Nicodemus** (conqueror of the people), John 3: 1. A Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews and teacher of Israel who visited Jesus at night.

- Nicolaitans** (followers of Nicholas), Rev. 2: 6. A sect whose deeds were severely condemned.
- Niger** (black), Acts 13: 1. One of the teachers and prophets in the church at Antioch.
- Nile** (blue, dark), Gen. 15: 8. The principal river of Egypt.
- Nimrod** (rebellion, or the valiant), Gen. 10: 8. A grandson of Ham.
- Nineveh** (abode of Ninus), Gen. 10: 11. The capital of the ancient kingdom of Assyria.
- Ninevites**, Luke 11: 30. The inhabitants of Nineveh, to whom Jonah preached.
- Numbers**. The fourth book of the Old Testament.
- Nymphas** (bridegroom), Col. 4: 15. A wealthy Christian in Laodicea.

O

- Old Testament**. Name given to the Holy Scriptures before the advent of Christ.
- Olives, Mount of**, 2 Sam. 15: 30; Acts 1: 12. Mount near Jerusalem.
- Omega**, Rev. 1: 8. Last letter of the Greek alphabet.
- Onesimus** (profitable, useful), Col. 4: 9. The name of the servant of Philemon.
- Ophir** (abundance), 1 Chron. 29: 4. A seaport from which Solomon obtained gold for the temple.

P

- Padan-aram** (tableland 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.
- Peninnah** (coral, or pearl), 1 Sam. 1: 2. One of Elkanah's wives.
- Pentateuch** (five). Greek name given to the first five books of the Old Testament.
- Pentecost** (fiftieth), Acts 2: 1. Feast which came fifty days after the Passover.
- Perga** (fr. Greek), Acts 13: 13. A city in Pamphylia.
- Pergamos** (height, elevation), Rev. 1: 11. A city of Mysia, about three miles to the north of the River Caicus.
- Pergamum**, Rev. 1: 11. Same as Pergamos.
- Persia** (pure, splendid), Ezek. 38: 5. Name given to an ancient empire.
- Peter** (a rock or stone), John 1: 42. Name given to Simon, the brother of Andrew, one of the twelve apostles.
- Pharaoh**, Ex. 1: 8. Common title of the kings of Egypt.
- Pharisees**, Matt. 15: 7. A religious sect among the Jews. They believed in a resurrection of the dead.
- Philadelphia** (brotherly love), Rev. 3: 9. Town on the borders of Lydia and Phrygia.
- Philemon** (loving), Col. 4: 9. Name of Christian to whom Paul addressed his epistle in behalf of Onesimus.
- Philetus** (beloved), 2 Tim. 2: 17. Associated with Hymeneus.
- Philip** (lover of horses), John 1: 44. One of the twelve apostles.
- Phillistines** (immigrants), Jer. 47: 4. One of the tribes that inhabited Caphtor, or Crete.
- Phinehas** (mouth of brass), 1 Sam. 1: 3. Son of Eli.
- Phoebe** (radiant), Rom. 16: 1. The name of a Christian woman.
- Phoenicia** (land of palm trees), 2 Sam. 5: 11. Country on east coast of Mediterranean Sea.
- 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. 23: 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.
Reign (to rule), 2 Tim. 2: 12. To govern, to rule over.
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.
Seeva (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.
Shechem (back or shoulders), Jno. 4: 5. A city of Samaria.
Shem (name), Gen. 5: 32. The eldest son of Noah.
Shiloh (place of rest), Judges 21: 19. A city of 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.
- Syrophœnician**, 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.
- Timnah** (portion), Judges 14: 1. Concubine of Samson.
- 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

- Version**. A translation.
- Vision**, Luke 2: 25, 26. A revelation.
- 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.

Zebah and Zalmunna (deprived of protection), Judges 8: 5-21. Two kings of Midian.

Zebedee (my gift), Matt. 4: 21. Father of James and John.

Zebulun (a habitation), Gen. 30: 20. The tenth of the sons of Jacob.

Zechariah, Ex. 5: 1, 6. The eleventh in order of the twelve minor prophets.

Zenas, Tit. 3: 13. A believer who is described as "the lawyer."

Zephaniah (hidden by Jehovah), Zeph. 1: 1. The ninth in order of the twelve minor prophets.

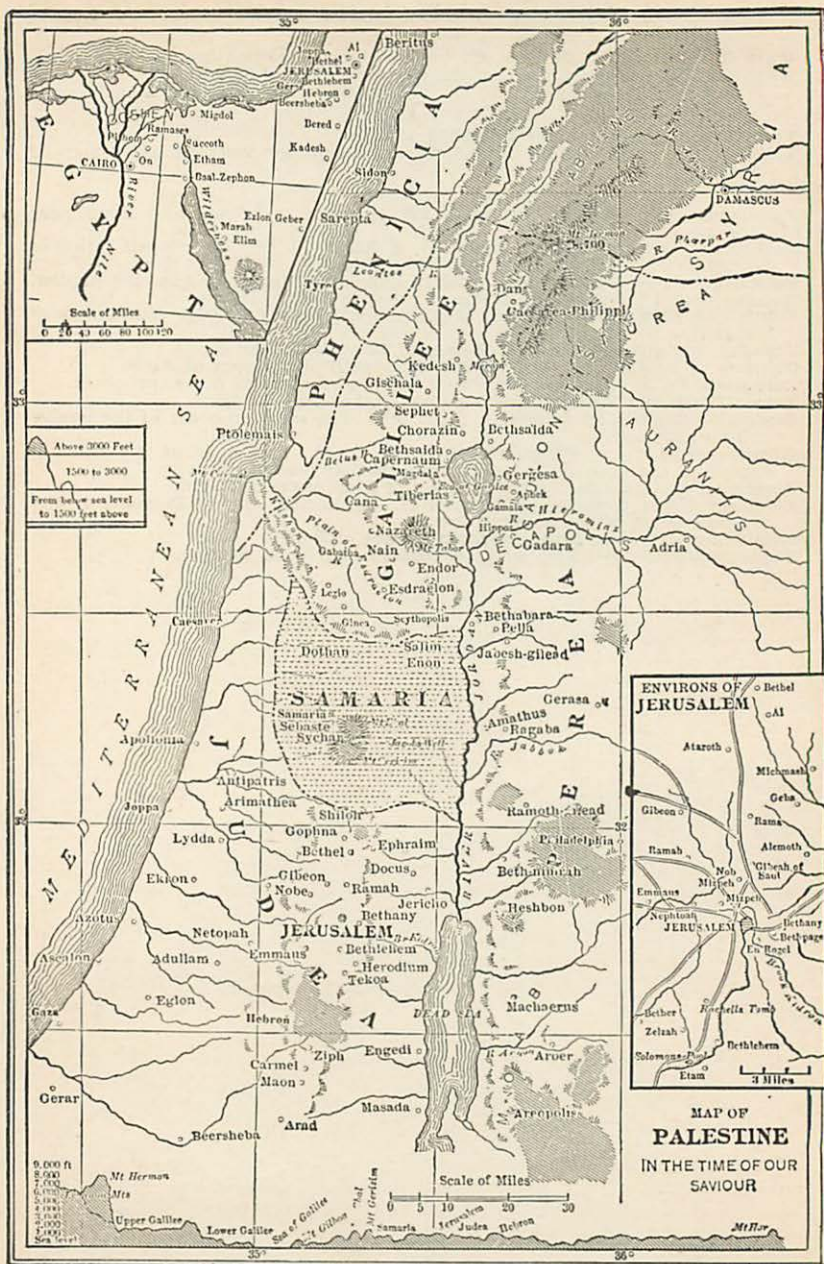
Zerubbabel (born at Babel, Babylon), Ez. 6: 18. The head of the tribe of Judah at the time of the return from the Babylonian captivity.

Zeruah (Balsam), 1 Sam. 26: 6. Mother of Joab, sister of David.

Zidon, or Sidon, Gen. 10: 15; Luke 6: 17. An ancient city of Phenicia on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean.

Zorah (hornet), Josh. 19: 41. A town in tribe of Dan.

Zuph (honeycomb), 1 Sam. 9: 5. A country in tribe of Benjamin.



FIRST QUARTER

THE GOSPEL OF SERVICE

(According to Mark)

AIM: *To lead the student to appreciate how Jesus in his life and teachings emphasized service to all men; to help the student to devote his life to the task of building a new world in accordance with the ideals of our Lord.*

Lesson I—January 2, 1938

THE GOSPEL OF MARK: A PREVIEW

Mark 10: 35-45

35 And there come near unto him James and John, the sons of Zebedee, saying unto him, Teacher, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall ask of thee.

36 And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?
37 And they said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy glory.

38 But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink? or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

39 And they said unto him, We are able. And Jesus said unto them, The cup that I drink ye shall drink; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:

40 But to sit on my right hand or on my left hand is not mine to give; but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared.

41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be moved with indignation concerning James and John.

42 And Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they who are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great ones exercise authority over them.

43 But it is not so among you: but whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister;

44 And whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all.

45 For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*And whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all.*” (Mark 10: 44.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 42: 22.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

December 27.	M.	Seeking Empty Honors (Mark 10: 35-40)
December 28.	T.	The Royalty of Service (Mark 10: 41-45)
December 29.	W.	The Greatest in the Kingdom (Luke 22: 24-30)
December 30.	T.	A Mother's Mistaken Ambition (Matt. 20: 20-23)
December 31.	F.	A Laudable Ambition (Phil. 3: 8-16)
January 1.	S.	Our Supreme Example (John 13: 6-17)
January 2.	S.	God's Servant (Isa. 42: 1-8)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—According to Hales, A.D. 31. This seems to be the correct date. (See time, in the next lesson.) As Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem to attend the Passover, it must have been the latter part of March or the first part of April.

Place.—Near the river Jordan. Jesus and his company were on their way from Galilee to Jerusalem. In going to Jerusalem the people of Galilee, to avoid going through Samaria, crossed the Jordan below the Sea of Galilee, went down the east side of Jordan through Perea, and recrossed the Jordan east of Jericho. It is likely that they were nearing Jericho when the conversation of our lesson was held.

Persons.—Jesus, James, John, and the other disciples. James and John, sons of Zebedee and Salome, were apostles. Because of their fiery spirit Jesus named them Sons of Thunder. Their fiery spirit was shown when they wanted to call fire down from heaven to consume the people of a Samaritan village for refusing to give Jesus lodging. (Luke 9: 51-55.) Before they left all to follow Jesus, they and their father Zebedee were engaged in the fishing business. Peter and Andrew were partners with them. Their equipment shows that they carried on an extensive and profitable business. They owned their boats and nets. (See Matt. 4: 18-22; Mark 1: 16-20; Luke 5: 1-11.) From Matt. 27: 55 and Mark 15: 40, 41, we learn that many disciples besides the apostles were with Jesus on this journey from Galilee to Jerusalem.

Lesson Links.—The most of our lessons for the first half of this year are taken from the Gospel according to Mark, the Gospel of Service. The present lesson is therefore an appropriate beginning for the series of lessons, for it gives service as God's measure of true greatness. And as there is true greatness in service, so also is there such a thing as true service. For service to be true service, it must be correct in form and spirit—must be done as the Lord directs, and in the spirit of humble obedience.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

James and John Ask for Positions of Honor (Verses 35-37)

When Jesus called James and John from their business of fishing, they promptly left their boats and nets with their father and followed him. Because they and the other apostles had left all to follow Jesus, he promised them, that they, in the regeneration, when he sat upon his throne, should also sit upon thrones; judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Though Jesus had also told them that he would be killed in Jerusalem, and would rise again in three days, James and John still had their minds on those thrones, and were ambitious for worldly advancement.

"Teacher, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall ask of thee." From Matthew's account we learn that their mother Salome joined them in this request. It is likely that she made the request first, and then her sons put in their plea. It is natural for a mother to have ambitions for her sons. But the request was made in a childish way. They wanted Jesus to promise to give them anything they would ask, and then they would tell him what they wanted. They wanted him to sign a blank check, so to speak, and let them fill it with anything they wanted. It appears that they thought they might catch him off his guard, and entrap him into making a rash promise. Their effort to do so was no credit to their estimate of Jesus, but their tactics failed. Jesus asked them: "What would ye that I should do for you?"

Verse 37.—“And they said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy glory.” Instead of the phrase, “in thy glory,” Matthew has, “in thy kingdom.” The phrases therefore mean the same thing, or rather, refer to the same condition of affairs. Jesus would be in his glory when seated on the throne of his kingdom. They still had a worldly kingdom in mind, in which places of honor would be dispensed through favoritism, and they wanted the chief places of honor. Jesus had recently told the apostles that when he was seated on his throne, they would sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Mistaking the nature of the kingdom and the thrones in it, they wanted their thrones to be next to his. With their ideas of the kingdom, their ambition was natural, but not in harmony with the plans of Jesus; neither was it in harmony with the character that the followers of Jesus must have. Worldly ambition is not a Christ-like trait, yet even now many churches are injured, and some are ruined, by the unholy ambition of some to occupy places of honor in the church, and to rule the other members. Such men want to be looked up to as “officers” of the church, and want to direct everything. Instead of being followers of the Lord Jesus Christ they want to be regarded as *leaders*—leading men of the church. If such men do not destroy the church, they will ruin it spiritually. A man possessed of such ambitions is not fit to be either a preacher or an elder.

“Ye Know Not What Ye Ask” (Verses 38-41)

The request made by James and John grew out of ambition directed by ignorance. James and John had made a plain and direct request for a definite thing; yet Jesus replied, “Ye know not what ye ask.” The statement seems to mean that they did not know the nature of the thrones in his kingdom, for they seemed to have a clear idea of what they wanted. People want many things that are not according to God’s plans and purposes, and many prayers today grow out of ignorance, even as did the prayer of James and John. Certainly no one should pray for a high seat of authority in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. “Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink?” In this figurative use of the word “cup,” it refers to one’s portion in life. Though it here refers to the sufferings Christ would undergo, it does not always refer to suffering. Referring to God’s goodness to him, David said, “My cup runneth over.” Jesus would have to undergo the sufferings of death before he could sit on his throne, and so would James and John. Hence, in praying for thrones of special honor, they were also ignorantly praying for that which was necessary—death—before they could have any thrones. Could they drink that cup? “Or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” Jesus here speaks of his coming sufferings as a baptism, because of their overwhelming nature. The figure is here used because in real baptism one is completely overwhelmed. If baptism had been only the sprinkling of a little water on a person, Jesus would never have referred to his suffering and death as a baptism. Jesus did not belittle his death by calling it a mere sprinkling of suffering. He knew that he would be overwhelmed with suffering, even unto the most agonizing death.

Verse 39.—They answered, “We are able.” They were confident

that they were able to undergo whatever was in store for them. Many today are lacking in confidence. One grows weary of hearing: "We are not able"; "it cannot be done." Jesus told James and John that they would drink the cup and endure the baptism of suffering, but they knew little of what he meant.

Verses 40, 41.—"But to sit on my right hand or on my left hand is not mine to give; but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared." God's blessings and honors are not arbitrarily bestowed through a spirit of favoritism, but are given to those who are prepared to receive them; for such persons they are prepared. When the ten heard this, they were indignant at James and John. They felt that James and John were seeking an advantage over them. It is contrary to gospel teaching for one Christian to seek advantage over another. The church needs no self-seekers. If James and John had not overcome their self-seeking spirit, they never would have become useful servants of God. The other apostles justly felt indignant. Perhaps the ten felt also that James and John should have been more considerate than to be clamoring for positions of honor just after their beloved Lord had told them of the suffering and death that he must soon undergo. But other things do not have much weight with a person whose heart is set on selfish ends.

Jesus Explains True Greatness (Verses 42-45)

"And Jesus called them to him."—It will be remembered that on a former occasion the disciples had disputed about who was greatest. (Mark 9: 33-37.) Jesus knew the frailties of human beings, and that his disciples had not yet fully comprehended the spirit and genius of his religion. But he would not have them again to become embroiled over who should have the chief places in his kingdom. In view of the experiences they were soon to have, they needed to be in a better frame of mind than that. "Ye know that they who are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great ones exercise authority over them." This hint to James and John that they were manifesting the spirit of their hated Gentile rulers ought to have had a sobering effect on those two Jews, and the gentle rebuke it gave them should have given some satisfaction to the ten. None but the Master could have thought of delivering such an effective rebuke in such a form of words. They must have felt it keenly, but they could not be certain that he meant it for a rebuke. "But it is not so among you." In his kingdom there would be no "great ones" to exercise authority over the others—none with authority to lord it over the rest. In his kingdom there would be no such places of authority as James and John sought. It is true that the apostles were all to sit on thrones, but they would exercise no personal authority over others. The authority they had—the only power they possessed—was in the inspired utterances which they delivered. "But whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister." A minister was a servant, a waiting man. The word implies nothing as to the kind of service rendered. The kind of service depended upon the will of the master of the servant. And so it is under Christ. In the New Testament usage a preacher is not a minister in any exclusive or preeminent sense—no more than is an elder or a deacon. To be great in the kingdom one must be

a great servant. The world calls the man great who succeeds in getting many others to serve him. But God does not see things as man sees them. With him, the one who serves most, is greatest. "And whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all." To be first in the sense of this statement is to be the most prominent—first in importance. And the word "servant" here is from a word that means a "bondservant, a slave." "Through love be ye servants one of another." The Christian is to serve the interests and welfare of others. Too many professed Christians want to lead, to command, to issue orders for others to carry out, and then boast of the great things they have done. It is a pity also that there is another class who want to be bossed. The latter class do not like to take the initiative; they do not like to assume responsibilities. They prefer that some one else tell them what to do, so that if things do not turn out just right they can shift the blame to others. These traits of character cause a lot of trouble in the churches of Jesus Christ.

Verse 45.—"For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." Again Jesus said, "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth." (Luke 22: 27.) No service was too lowly for him to render, as is shown by his washing his disciples' feet. He served humanity's lowliest needs. He was moved with compassion at the sight of human suffering, and spent much time in giving relief to the sick and afflicted. He fed the hungry, healed the sick, taught the ignorant, rebuked sin, forgave the sinner, bore with the weak, and comforted the sorrowing. If it be said that he was the Great Teacher, let it be said that he was also the Great Servant and Benefactor. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." We should walk in his steps. Jesus came to serve, "and to give his life a ransom for many." The word from which we have "ransom" means the price paid to secure the freedom of a slave, the release of a captive, or the life and freedom of one condemned to death. Jesus died that the sinner might be freed from the bondage, the guilt, and the consequences of sin. Jesus had often spoken of his coming death; but here is the first time he revealed the fact that he was to give up his life as the price for man's redemption from sin and death. The same great truth is set forth in many later passages.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Selfish ambition is a positive hindrance to Christian living, and unfits one for effective service in promoting genuine Christianity.

Preachers, who ought to be examples in Christian deportment, often manifest a self-seeking spirit. There is something radically wrong when a dozen or more preachers engage in a scramble for the same place to preach. The church that employs either of them is inviting trouble.

Jesus gave himself a ransom for all, but he does not force anyone to accept the redemption he purchased for us.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The evils of selfish ambition.

The nature of the kingdom of Christ.

How to be a good servant.
 Christ the great servant.
 Christ as a ransom for sinners.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
 Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

The teacher should have students in turn give facts about time, place, and persons.
 What is true service?

Verses 35-37

Who were James and John?
 How did they go about making a request?
 What did they desire?
 What does "in glory" mean?
 What was wrong with their request?
 What harm comes of such ambition in the church?

Verses 38-41

What did Jesus say in reply to their request?

What did he mean by cup?
 In what was Jesus to be baptized, and how?

Show the appropriateness of his figure of speech.
 For whom are God's blessings prepared?

How did the ten feel about the request of James and John?

Verses 42-45

What did Jesus say about the rulers of the Gentiles?

How was that a rebuke to James and John?

Who would be great in the kingdom?
 What two classes make trouble?

Discuss Jesus as the servant.

What is a ransom?

Why are not all saved?

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson II—January 9, 1938

PREPARING FOR A LIFE OF SERVICE

Mark 1: 1-13

- 1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
- 2 Even as it is written in Isaiah the prophet,
 Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,
 Who shall prepare thy way;
- 3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness,
 Make ye ready the way of the Lord,
 Make his paths straight;
- 4 John came, who baptized in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins.
- 5 And there went out unto him all the country of Judaea, and all they of Jerusalem; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.
- 6 And John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leathern girdle about his loins, and did eat locusts and wild honey.
- 7 And he preached, saying, There cometh after me he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.
- 8 I baptized you in water; but he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit.
- 9 And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan.
- 10 And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him:
- 11 And a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.
- 12 And straightway the Spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness.
- 13 And he was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Make ye ready the way of the Lord." (Mark 1: 3.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 40: 3-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

January 3.	M.	Preparing the Way for Christ (Mark 1: 1-8)
January 4.	T.	The Preparation of Baptism (Mark 1: 9-13)
January 5.	W.	The Preparation of Repentance (Luke 19: 1-9)
January 6.	T.	The Preparation of Forgiveness (Psalm 130: 1-8)
January 7.	F.	The Preparation of Cleansing (James 4: 1-10)
January 8.	S.	The Preparation of Obedience (Jer. 42: 1-6)
January 9.	S.	God's Highway (Isa. 40: 3-11)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—A.D. 27, according to both Usher and Hales. The Bible deals little in exact dates. Chronologists differ as to the year in which Jesus was born. It is now generally agreed that our present method of dating is incorrect. Both Usher and Hales date the birth of Jesus four years earlier than our present method of dating shows. It was not until the sixth century after the birth of Jesus that people began to date events from his birth. In that century a learned monk, Dionysius Exiguus, calculated the time, but it was later found that Jesus was born four years earlier than the monk calculated. By that time the civilized nations were so generally using this date it was not convenient to try to correct it. Therefore when Jesus was baptized at the age of thirty, it was, according to present method of reckoning, A.D. 27. As John had been preaching and baptizing for some time, it is likely that Jesus was baptized in the late summer or early fall.

Place.—The wilderness of Judea, along the river Jordan. From Luke's account it appears that John had no fixed place for his preaching and baptizing: "And he came into all the region round about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins." (Luke 3: 3.)

Persons.—John the Baptist, the people, and Jesus. Vast multitudes heard John's preaching and were baptized. John the Baptist was a child of promise. His parents were of the family of Aaron. They were righteous, but childless. In answer to their prayers an angel announced to Zacharias that Elisabeth would bear a son, and that they should call his name John. He was not called John the Baptist until he began to baptize. Baptist means one who baptizes. Read the first chapter of Luke. Only this one brief statement is made concerning the life of John before he began to preach: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." (Luke 1: 80.) Growing to manhood in the deserts, or wilderness, unhampered by the customs and traditions of polite society or the hypocrisies of the religious leaders of his day, he developed that sturdiness and independence of character so manifest in his life and preaching. His wants were few, and these he supplied mainly from natural sources around him. He sought no favors or honors from men; neither did he fear man. He was bold enough to rebuke the king. He was finally beheaded. (Matt. 14: 1-12.)

Lesson Links.—When John began his ministry the Jews were in a state of both vexation and expectation. They were vexed that they were under subjection to the Roman government. They were expecting a Deliverer. Prophecies, too numerous to mention here, had foretold the coming of a Redeemer. Thinking that when the

Deliverer came he would free them from Roman rule and restore their kingdom as of old, they thought that John might be the expected One. "And as the people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply he were the Christ; John answered saying . . . there cometh he that is mightier than I." (Luke 3: 15, 16.) John's announcement that the kingdom of heaven was at hand helped to feed this expectation. The interest became so great that the leaders in Jerusalem sent a committee to John to learn of him whether he were the Christ. (John 1: 19-27.) John's mission was twofold. He came to get the people ready for the Lord, and to introduce the Lord to the people. The first point is presented in the body of our lesson; the second point is set forth by John himself: "And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, for this cause came I baptizing in water. . . . And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize in water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit. And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." Later John pointed him out, saying, "Behold, the lamb of God!"

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Mark's "Beginning" (Verse 1)

"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Some learned commentators regard these words as the title to Mark's record. As it is not a complete sentence, and has no direct connection with the words that follow, it seems more than probable that Mark wrote the words as a title, rather than as a part of the body of his book. It is a fact that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote only the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, for its full development came after the events with which their records close.

Through promise and prophecy the gospel had been foretold, but its actual development began with the coming of Jesus into the world. His birth, life, teaching, his death, his resurrection, and ascension were fundamental facts in the development of the gospel, but other essentials had to follow his ascension. The essential facts of the gospel were not completed till, having ascended to heaven, he was made High Priest, offered his blood for us, was also crowned King of kings, and sent down the Holy Spirit to the apostles to guide them in their work of preaching the gospel. So it is true that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John treat only of the beginning of the gospel.

John the Messenger—The Waymaker (Verse 2)

John was the subject of Old Testament prophecy. He was to be the Lord's messenger to announce the near approach of the kingdom of God. He was to go before the Lord to prepare the way for him. He did this by preaching the near approach of the kingdom and by leading the people to repent and be baptized. The imagery is taken from the custom of kings to send representatives before them to prepare the way for them. The nature of his work made his mission of short duration. For himself he claimed to be only a voice

crying in the wilderness. "He must increase, but I must decrease," said John. Also he said, "In the midst of you standeth one whom ye know not even he that cometh after me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose."

The People Had Something to Do (Verse 3)

"Make ye ready the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." John was the voice crying in the wilderness, and calling on the people to do something. When they were told what to do, the responsibility for the way they treated the preaching was theirs. They could reform, and live; or they could continue in sin, and perish.

Additional Matter Quoted by Luke.—Luke (3: 5, 6) quotes this additional matter from the prophecy of Isaiah: "Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough ways smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." John was not building literal roads; he was dealing with human beings—preparing the way for the Lord to come into the hearts and lives of human beings. In their own estimate of themselves some people are high and mighty, like the mountains and the hills. They must be brought low—must be brought into humble submission to the will of God. Some are dejected, low in spirit, having no hope—these have to be lifted up and inspired with new hopes and higher aims. The rough mannered people, the harsh and unforgiving people, must be made gentle and forbearing. Some people are so dishonest in their dealings as to gain the name of "crooks." They must be made straight. To be prepared for the kingdom people had to quit their crooked dealings. This sort of preparation is as necessary now as it was then.

John Preaches and Baptizes (Verses 4-8)

Though Luke tells us that John "came into all the region round about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins," it is likely that he did the most of his preaching and baptizing near the ford of the Jordan east of Jericho. This would be a convenient meeting place for the people coming from Jerusalem and Judea, and from Galilee. Matthew informs us that John baptized the people in the river Jordan. In the spring of the next year he "was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there." (John 3: 23.) This would be about the season in which "the Jordan overfloweth all its banks." (Josh. 3: 15.) Hence, the necessity of finding another place for his preaching and baptizing. When Mark says that all were baptized, he cannot mean that every Jew was baptized, but that crowds from all the regions named came and were baptized. As a matter of fact, Jesus, through his disciples, baptized many in Judea (John 3: 22; 4: 1, 2), and many refused to be baptized. (Luke 7: 30.)

What John Preached.—John did not preach himself. He preached that the kingdom of God was at hand, and called on the people to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, so that they would be prepared for the kingdom. Did God promise that the kingdom would soon come, or did he make a statement of a settled fact? If God promised the kingdom to those who repented and were baptized,

such characters received the kingdom, for "God is not slack concerning his promises." If it was a statement of an unconditional fact, then the kingdom certainly did come. John preached that one was coming after him who was mightier than he, and that they must believe in him that was to come. A lack of faith would debar them from the kingdom. He condemned sin, called on the people who were baptized to live worthy of their professed repentance, taught them that fleshly descent from Abraham was of no avail, and that the wicked would be cut down and burned. (Matt. 3: 7-12.)

John Baptizes Jesus (Verses 9-11)

Mark's account of the baptism of Jesus is much briefer than Matthew's account. While John was preaching and baptizing the multitudes who came confessing their sins, a kinsman came down from Galilee to be baptized. It seems that John knew Jesus to be a pure man, but did not know him to be the promised Messiah. Said he to Jesus, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" John had been baptizing people who came confessing their sins. Jesus had no sins to be confessed or forgiven; hence John saw no need to baptize him. But Jesus said, "Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Jesus would not leave off so much as one command of God. With the marginal reading in the text, Mark says that Jesus "was baptized of John into the Jordan." Hence, Jesus was baptized—dipped—into the Jordan. He then came up out of the water. These statements would not have been made, if John had sprinkled a little water on Jesus. In being sprinkled a person is not baptized into the water, nor does he come up out of the water.

As Jesus came up out of the river, the heavens were rent asunder, the Spirit of God as a dove descended upon him, and a voice from heaven said, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." Was there ever another scene like that? John the Baptist, the greatest among men, was the administrator of that baptism; Jesus, the Son of God and Messiah, was the subject; the Holy Spirit in visible form gave his sanction; and the Father spoke his approval from heaven. Search history—was there ever another scene in which the greatest man and all three persons of the Godhead had part? In view of such a scene, it sounds cheap to hear a professed preacher of the gospel deliver a harangue in which he seeks to belittle baptism.

The Temptations of Jesus (Verses 12, 13)

The student should read Matthew's and Luke's records of the temptations. (Matt. 4: 1-11; Luke 4: 1-13.) The records of Mark and Luke seem to indicate that Jesus was tempted during the forty days, as well as after the forty days ended. In what ways he was tempted during the forty days, we are not informed; but the struggle was so intense that he did not become hungry. Perhaps the devil then ceased his temptations till nature reasserted itself and he became hungry. Under great emotional strain people do not become hungry. The emotional strain over for a short period, Jesus became hungry. This gave the devil an opportunity to strike at the weakest

point, for nothing else is so urgent as intense hunger or thirst. The devil presented two temptations with a sneering if—"if thou art the Son of God." By making bread Jesus could satisfy his hunger and also prove himself to be the Son of God. But Jesus did not desire to prove anything to the devil, nor to adopt any of his suggestions. He did silence him with the scriptures, and withstood every temptation. Then the angels came and ministered to him.

SOME REFLECTIONS

For citizenship in the kingdom of heaven a person must put sin out of his heart and become thoroughly submissive to the will of God. In John's ministry baptism was a test of the people's willingness to surrender to the will of God, and it is even so now. Some then rejected the counsel of God, even as they do now, in refusing to be baptized.

John's preaching would sound harsh to the wrongly cultivated ear. He denounced sin in the strongest terms, called the multitude a generation of vipers, told the proud Jew that his Abrahamic blood would avail him nothing without righteousness, demanded a thorough repentance and a righteous life, and told them plainly the doom of every sinner. It was not a time for soft words and flattering speech. When God's true servants preach, they do not flatter.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

John baptized no infants.

Discuss Jesus' estimate of John (Matt. 11: 7-15.)

The temptations of Jesus.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give facts about date of Jesus' birth.

Where did John baptize?

Give persons of our lesson.

Give some facts about the birth and life of John.

Give some facts about the Jews, and what they expected.

Who did they think John might be?

Give the twofold nature of John's mission.

Verse 1

What title did Mark give his record?

Why call his record "the beginning of the gospel"?

Give some essential facts that Mark's record does not contain.

Verse 2

What was John called?

What message did he announce?

What was he to do?

Verse 3

What shows that the people had something to do?

Give what Luke says (3: 5, 6).

From what was Luke's imagery drawn?

How did this fit in with John's work?

Verses 4-8

Where did John likely do most of his baptizing?

Where else did John baptize?

Why should he leave the Jordan?

What proof that John did not baptize every Jew?

Give an outline of the things John preached.

What did John demand of the people?

Verses 9-11

Give facts about the baptism of Jesus.

What proof that he was immersed?

Tell what occurred as Jesus came up out of the water.

Verses 12, 13

Describe the temptations of Jesus.

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson III—January 16, 1938

BEGINNING A LIFE OF SERVICE

Mark 1: 14-28

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.

19 And going on a little further, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending the nets.

20 And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after him.

21 And they go into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught.

22 And they were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes.

23 And straightway there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

24 Saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Nazarene? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

25 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

26 And the unclean spirit, tearing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him.

27 And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What is this? a new teaching! with authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.

28 And the report of him went out straightway everywhere into all the region of Galilee round about.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel."* (Mark 1: 15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 11: 1-9.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

January 10.	M.	Repentance and Faith (Mark 1: 14, 15)
January 11.	T.	Fishermen Begin a Life of Service (Mark 1: 16-20)
January 12.	W.	Jesus' First Act of Healing (Mark 1: 21-28)
January 13.	T.	Jesus Calls Men to Service (Matt. 4: 18-22)
January 14.	F.	Peter Heals a Lame Man (Acts 3: 1-11)
January 15.	S.	Three Thousand Enlist for Service (Acts 2: 37-47)
January 16.	S.	The Culmination of Our Lord's Ministry (Isa. 11: 1-9)

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 4: 18-22; Luke 4: 31-37.

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—A.D. 28. By reading John 1: 19-51, also the second, third, and fourth chapters of John, and Luke 4: 1-32, the student will see that Mark skips over a considerable period of time. After the temptations of Jesus, Mark immediately takes up the beginning of the Galilean ministry of Jesus. As John's preaching was done in the open country, it must have been done mostly in the warm dry season; and as he had been preaching and baptizing a considerable time before Jesus was baptized, Jesus must have been baptized toward the close of the summer or in the early fall of A.D. 27. It was some time during the next year that the events of our lesson occurred. (See Lesson Links.)

Place.—Capernaum, in Galilee. Galilee was the northern province of Palestine. To the south of it lay Samaria; south of Samaria lay Judea. Galilee was a fertile and prosperous district, thickly dotted with cities and villages, mostly inhabited by Jews. Being cut off by Samaria from close contact with Judea, the Galileans were not much under the influence of Jerusalem, the center of Jewish culture and piety. To a certain extent they developed their own habits and customs. It seems that the masses were not so strict in observing the traditions of the elders as were the Jews in Judea. But they resented the Roman yoke, and longed for freedom.

Persons.—Jesus, Peter, Andrew, James, John, a man with an unclean spirit, and the multitudes in Galilee. The four disciples named were partners in the fishing business.

Lesson Links.—Between the temptation of Jesus and the beginning of his Galilean ministry many things occurred, none of which are mentioned by Mark. After the temptation Jesus returned to the place where John was baptizing, and John bore witness of him to the people. (John 1: 29-36.) Here Jesus gathered about him five disciples and returned to Galilee. (John 1: 37-51.) He and his disciples attended a marriage in Cana of Galilee, where he performed his first miracle. (John 2: 1-11.) He then went down to Capernaum where he remained but a few days, and then went up to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of the Passover. (John 2: 12, 13.) While there he cleansed the temple and performed many signs. He also held the conversation with Nicodemus, and then spent some time in Judea teaching and baptizing people before starting back to Galilee. On his way he stopped at Jacob's well, where he held a conversation with a woman of Samaria. He remained with the Samaritans two days, and then went down to Galilee. He then went up to Cana of Galilee, where he healed the son of a certain nobleman. (Read third and fourth chapters of John.) He also visited Nazareth, and his old neighbors sought to kill him, but he escaped out of their hands, and went down to Capernaum. (Luke 4: 16-31.) Here Mark takes up the story. It is plain therefore that the title to our lesson is not correct, for this lesson is not the beginning of a life of service. Jesus had been active in his ministry for several months.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Jesus Preaches in Galilee (Verses 14, 15)

After Jesus attended the first Passover after his baptism, he spent some time preaching and baptizing in Judea (John 3: 22), before going into Galilee. Two circumstances seemed to cause him to make this move. The Pharisees resented his growing fame. (John 4: 12, 13.) Herod had induced his brother Philip's wife to become his own wife, and John had rebuked him for that sin. For this rebuke Herod cast John into prison. Herodias, Herod's wife, was greatly angered at John, and would have killed him, if Herod had not protected him. Herod both feared and respected John, for he knew John to be a righteous man. (Mark 6: 14-20.)

The main theme of John's preaching was, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." After John was cast into prison, "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying,

The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel." The connection shows that the gospel that Jesus preached was the good news that the kingdom was at hand—its establishment was near. The time for its establishment was fulfilled. God had set his own time for the kingdom to come, and God's time for it had come. To be ready for the kingdom the people had to repent and believe in the gospel. Many of them repented and believed in the good news of the near approach of the kingdom. Jesus made two emphatic declarations: "The time is fulfilled," "the kingdom of God is at hand." To say that the kingdom is yet future is to say that both statements of Jesus were, and are, false.

Repent and Believe.—The commands to repent and believe were addressed to the Jews. They believed in God and in his law as given through Moses, but they had sinned against God in whom they believed—they had violated the law which they recognized. They were called on to repent of these sins, and to believe in this gospel of the kingdom. They could not believe in it nor sin against it, before it was preached to them. It is therefore a perversion of the scriptures to try to make this passage teach that a sinner must repent of his sins before he can believe in God. No man can repent of sins unless he recognizes himself as a sinner, and he cannot recognize himself as a sinner against God unless he believes in God.

Peter, Andrew, James, and John Called (Verses 16-20)

Jesus spent much time on the Sea of Galilee and along its shore. He was not engaged in a mere aimless walk along its shores when he came upon Peter, Andrew, James, and John. They were fishermen. They were not spending a few days at the seashore, fishing for sport; fishing was their business. The four, with Zebedee, the father of James and John, were partners. (Luke 5: 10.) These men were not paupers, not shiftless ne'er-do-wells. It required considerable outlay of money to equip themselves with nets and with boats of sufficient size to weather the storms which so frequently swooped down on the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus Calls Them.—"Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." The phrase, "fishers of men," refers to their future work of preaching the gospel and converting men. Once when Peter was amazed at the abundance of fish caught in the net, Jesus said, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." (Luke 5: 10.) For catch the marginal reading has Greek, "take alive."

They Promptly Obey.—"And straightway they left the nets, and followed him." Does their prompt obedience seem strange to you? Did they so promptly follow one of whom they knew nothing? No; Jesus would not want that kind of followers. Peter, Andrew, and John had become acquainted with Jesus some months before this when John pointed him out to his disciples on the banks of the Jordan. (John 1: 35-42.) Perhaps they and the others who became apostles were with Jesus in his movements as outlined in Lesson Links, but were now seeking to make some expense money. Now Jesus calls them to forsake all and follow him.

Property Not Abandoned.—He who, when the thousands were fed, would have the scraps gathered up that nothing be lost, would certainly not have these men abandon their property to ruin. They left their nets and boats with Zebedee and the hired servants. It is likely that some of the profits made by Zebedee and the servants went to the support of Jesus and his company. Their having hired servants also shows that they were carrying on considerable business.

Jesus Teaches in Synagogue at Capernaum (Verses 21, 22)

"And they go into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught." It seems that synagogues originated while the Jews were in Babylonian captivity. They could not go to Jerusalem to worship, and they were badly scattered through Babylonian provinces. Their only means of encouraging one another was for the Jews in a community to meet for the purpose of teaching and exhorting one another. The word synagogue means an assembly, and was originally applied to these local assemblies. These meetings were kept up after the Jews returned to their own land; and the word synagogues finally came to be applied also to the house in which they met. Jesus often taught in these synagogues. They had regular meetings on the Sabbath. It seems from Luke 7: 1-5 that the Roman centurion at Capernaum built the Capernaum synagogue.

The People Astonished.—No teacher was supposed to teach anything on his own authority. He might teach the law of Moses and the traditions of the elders, but no more. Jesus astonished them; "for he taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes." When Jesus preached the sermon on the mount, "the multitudes were astonished at his teaching; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes." Boldly, and on his own authority, he presented his teaching. He avoided the traditions of the elders as one would avoid a deadly poison. The people had never seen it done in that fashion, and they did not know what to make of it.

A Demon Cast Out (Verses 23-26)

The Unclean Spirit.—"And straightway there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit." The demons were sometimes called "evil spirits," and were also called "unclean spirits," as in this verse. It is said that the Greeks thought the spirits of their dead heroes acted as messengers between their gods and men. These they called demons, and worshiped them. The Jews had a different theory. With them demons were evil spirits in people—the spirits of wicked dead people, which took up their abode in people. Of one fact we can be certain, namely, that people were then sometimes possessed of demons—beyond that we know little.

The Worship Disturbed.—"What have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Nazarene? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." To have the worship so rudely disturbed must have been an unusual thing in that synagogue. It is evident that these unclean spirits, or demons, possessed superhuman knowledge, else they would not have been able to recognize Jesus

as "the Holy One of God." They also knew that there was nothing in common between them and Jesus.

The Demon Rebuked and Cast Out.—Jesus rebuked the spirit, and commanded him, as he did others, to hold his peace. Though the demon readily recognized him and freely confessed him to be the Son of God, Jesus did not want evidence from that source. It was not yet time for Jesus to be openly announced to the people in his true nature; neither did he want the impression to be made on the people that there was anything in common between him and these evil spirits. Perhaps Satan, under whose influence these evil spirits acted, caused them to confess Jesus as the Son of God as a means of discrediting him before the people. Jesus guarded against that; but, in spite of this precaution of Jesus, the Pharisees charged that he cast out demons by Beelzebub, or Satan, the prince of demons. Jesus showed the absurdity of their charge by saying, "If Satan casteth out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?" (See Matt. 12: 24-29.) It seems that the evil spirits found some satisfaction in dwelling in human beings, and were much averse to being driven out of their chosen habitation. But Jesus cast this spirit out, as he did others. However, this evil spirit showed great displeasure in being driven out of the man—"tearing him," or perhaps more correctly, convulsing him.

The People Amazed—His Fame Spreads (Verses 27, 28)

If the people had known who Jesus really was, they would not have been astonished at any powers he possessed. His mighty powers would have filled them with awe, but not with amazement. They would have known that he had power over all unclean spirits, as well as over all the forces of nature. With the miracles he was performing it is not astonishing that "the report of him went out straightway everywhere into all the region of Galilee round about." His miracles served two ends besides the relief of suffering. They gained attention, so that people would more readily listen to him, and they proved that God was with him. Miracles wrought in connection with any one's preaching were signs that God approved his preaching and his claims.

SOME REFLECTIONS

When the disciples left their business to follow Jesus in his journeys, they could not have had very clear ideas as to his mission or what lay before them; but they were sincere and they were devoted to him. Willingness to follow Jesus and to learn of him made them acceptable to him, and that condition of heart is needed now.

Jesus honored labor when he toiled at the carpenter's trade. He also honored labor when he chose these hardy fishermen. Men who can work, but will not work, are parasites—just so much vermin on the rest of the human family. If a man like that undertakes to preach, he does so without an invitation from Jesus.

No one who is acquainted with the fishing business need be surprised that Jesus selected so many apostles who were fishermen. To be successful in the fishing business, as were these men, requires physical strength, energy, and perseverance. They knew hardships,

and how to meet disappointments—how to toil all night, and catch nothing, and not give up. In fishing for men they would need these qualities. Men who made a success of fishing were not quitters. They were not of the class who say, "If I fish a few minutes and catch nothing, I am ready to quit." Jesus could not make fishers of men out of that sort of material. An apostle would need to know how to meet discouragements, and how to endure hardships. If a man would be a faithful gospel preacher today, he must have these qualities.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

When the kingdom came.
The kind of men needed for preachers.
The synagogue.
Miracles and their uses.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give information as to time of lesson.
Give facts about the place.
Name the persons.
Give outline of events skipped by Mark.

Verses 14, 15

Give information about Galilee and its people.
What did John preach about the kingdom?
What similar preaching did Jesus do?
What theory contradicts what they preached?
Of what were the Jews to repent?
Can a man repent who does not believe in God?

Verses 16-20

Which four disciples were called?
Why did they so promptly respond?
What shows that they were prosperous?
What was done with their property?

What did Jesus say he would make them?

Verses 21, 22

Give probable origin of synagogues?
To what did the word synagogue originally refer?
How did Jesus astonish the worshippers?
How did his teaching differ from their usual teaching?

Verses 23-26

What disturbed the synagogue worship?
How did the demons know Jesus?
Why did Jesus command the demon to hold his peace?
What else did Jesus command the demon to do?

Verses 27, 28

What effect did the miracles have on the people?
Why were they so amazed?
What is said of his fame?
What two ends did the miracles serve?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IV—January 23, 1938

MINISTERING TO PHYSICAL NEEDS

Mark 1: 29-45

29 And straightway, when they were come out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

30 Now Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever; and straightway they tell him of her:

31 And he came and took her by the hand, and raised her up; and the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

32 And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were sick, and them that were possessed with demons.

33 And all the city was gathered together at the door.

34 And he healed many that were sick with divers diseases, and cast out

many demons; and he suffered not the demons to speak, because they knew him.

35 And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed.

36 And Simon and they that were with him followed after him;

37 And they found him, and say unto him, All are seeking thee.

38 And he saith unto them, Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth.

39 And he went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out demons.

40 And there cometh to him a leper, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

41 And being moved with compassion, he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou made clean.

42 And straightway the leprosy departed from him, and he was made clean.

43 And he strictly charged him, and straightway sent him out,

44 And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing the things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

45 But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to spread abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into a city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And he healed many that were sick." (Mark 1: 34.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 61: 1-6.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

January 17.	M.	Jesus' Second Act of Healing (Mark 1: 29-39)
January 18.	T.	Healing a Leper (Mark 1: 40-45)
January 19.	W.	A Palsied Man Healed (Matt. 9: 1-8)
January 20.	T.	Commissioned to Heal (Matt. 10: 1-8)
January 21.	F.	Peter's Power to Heal (Acts 9: 32-41)
January 22.	S.	Meeting Human Needs (Luke 9: 10-17)
January 23.	S.	The Divine Benefactor (Isa. 61: 1-6)

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 8: 2-4; Luke 4: 42, 43; 5: 12-14.

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—A.D. 28. See time, in Lesson III.

Places.—A synagogue in Capernaum, and desert places in Galilee. It is probable that synagogues originated in community meetings during the years of Babylonian captivity. Originally the word synagogue, as its meaning indicates, applied to these assemblies; later the name was also applied to the place of meeting. The synagogue activities consisted in teaching, discipline, and worship. It was the custom of Jesus to attend the synagogue services. The desert places mentioned in the Bible were not dry regions devoid of vegetation. In New Testament usage a desert place was an uninhabited place, and not an arid region. Proof: "And they went away in the boat to a desert place apart." In preparing to feed the thousands which followed him, Jesus commanded them to sit down by companies upon the green grass. (Mark 6: 31-44.) Hence, they went in a boat to a desert place where there was green grass. It is well to call these things to mind when some one argues that Philip could not have found enough water in a desert in which to immerse the Ethiopian nobleman. (Acts 8: 26-38.)

Persons.—Jesus, Simon, Andrew, James, John, Peter's mother-in-law, a leper, and the multitudes. Simon, better known as Peter, was Andrew's brother. James and John were brothers. These four

later became apostles. Peter, claimed by Roman Catholics as the first pope, was a married man. Married men cannot be popes.

Lesson Links.—With Jesus human sufferings were real. He did not treat them as “delusions of the mortal mind.” Such sufferings stirred his heart with compassion, and he healed many that were afflicted; lepers were cleansed, sick people were made well, the blind were made to see, the maimed were made whole, and the crippled were made to walk. But the mission of Jesus was mainly to save people from sin, and to make them whole spiritually. The cures he performed were a means to that end. They showed the benevolence of his purposes and aims toward the human family, and thereby to create in men a desire to do good to others. They also served to gain him a hearing; but above all things else, they proved that he was what he claimed to be. They were signs that God was with him, and approved him.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Jesus Heals Peter's Wife's Mother (Verses 29-31)

Jesus had been teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. During the services in the synagogue he also cast an evil spirit out of a man. “And straightway,” immediately, after leaving the synagogue, “they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.” From this and other references it seems that not all the men who afterwards became apostles had yet joined the group of personal followers of Jesus. Peter and Andrew had formerly lived at Bethsaida. (John 1: 44.) Now it appears that they live in Capernaum, and that Peter's wife's mother lives with them. “Now Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever.” Luke calls it a great fever. Jesus was immediately told of this sickness, and he lost no time in relieving the suffering woman of her fever. Her recovery from fever was not gradual, but instantaneous. When Jesus took her by the hand and raised her up, the fever left her. Neither did her sickness leave her in a weakened condition. In curing her Jesus also restored her strength, so that she was able to minister to them. Most likely she prepared something to eat, and otherwise ministered to the comfort of the visitors and the men of the family. This miracle was an instant and complete restoring of health and strength.

Jesus Casts Out Demons and Heals the Sick (Verses 32-34)

“And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were sick, and them that were possessed with demons.” It was the Sabbath, but with the Jews the day ended at even and a new day began. These Jews would not bring their sick to be cured while it was still the Sabbath. With them no effort was made to heal the sick on the Sabbath. There was nothing in the Sabbath law that prevented deeds of kindness or mercy on the Sabbath, but by their traditions the Jews had added a number of refinements to the law. They would attend to the needs of their stock on the Sabbath, but must not carry any burden nor practice the healing art. Jesus observed the Sabbath law, but he showed no respect for their traditions which were added to the law. The fact that the people would not bring their sick to be healed till the Sabbath ended shows what

a hold traditions of the elders had even on the Galileans. But when the Sabbath ended, they came in crowds, bringing their sick and afflicted, so that Jesus had no time that evening for rest and enjoyment of the hospitality of that home. But he healed the sick and cast out the demons. Again he suffered not the demons to speak.

Jesus Prayed (Verse 35)

It was likely very late in the night before Jesus had any rest from the crowds that thronged him the evening before; yet "in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed." "A desert place," a deserted, or uninhabited place. The Son of God prayed! The record shows that he spent much time in prayer. Prayer grows out of a feeling of need and confidence in God's ability and willingness to hear. Jesus knew that his Father was both willing and able to answer prayer. Such conditions of heart make praying as natural as breathing. It is a fine thing for people to cultivate in their hearts a feeling of dependence on God and a confidence in him as a Father who is able and willing to help his children. Too many people have hedged God in with a lot of their theories about the impossibility of God's answering prayer without working miracles till he means little more to them than a heathen god.

Jesus Preaches and Casts Out Demons Throughout Galilee (Verses 36-39)

It appears that Peter and the other disciples knew where to find Jesus, for they followed him. Crowds had begun to gather about the house before Peter and the others left, so much so that they reported, "All are seeking thee." The miracles of the evening before had created great excitement. But Jesus had demonstrated his power in Capernaum, and he had preached to the people of that city. Other places must be visited. "And he saith unto them, Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth." He would let the people of Capernaum meditate for a while on his teaching and his miracles. He would give them time to quiet down from their excitement so that they might be able to think more calmly about the significance of his miracles and the meaning of his teaching in synagogues as he went through Galilee. This seems to have been his first circuit through the towns of Galilee. Again we find him casting out demons.

Jesus Heals a Leper (Verses 40-42)

Lepers and demoniacs seem to have been numerous in Galilee. Jesus had been casting out demons; now a leper comes to him with faith enough to say, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." He was sure that Jesus could cure him of his loathsome disease; but seemed not to be sure that Jesus would do so. Hence, he said, "If you will." Did he doubt the willingness of Jesus to cure sickness? Certainly not. He knew that Jesus was both able and willing to cure sickness; otherwise, he would not have made the plea that he did. Doubtless, having been an outcast from society because of his leprosy, he felt that he was not worthy of any notice from Jesus. Jesus was

moved with compassion at the wretched condition of the man. He touched the man and said, "I will; be thou made clean." Jesus did not have to touch the man in order to heal him; but a friendly touch would mean much to a man whom all people had shunned. It would help to restore confidence and self-respect.

Leprosy.—In the days of Moses there were several kinds of skin diseases called leprosy, two of which rendered a person unclean. Such leprous persons might infect others. This was the law for them: "And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and the hair of his head shall go loose, and he shall cover his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. . . . He shall dwell alone." (See Lev. 13: 1-46.) Lepers were not to come into the company of other people. If they saw any one approaching, they were to cry out "Unclean, unclean." How thrilled must have been the leper of our lesson when Jesus bestowed upon him a friendly touch! The man was made clean, that is, he was cured.

The Leper Required to Observe the Law (Verses 43, 44)

"See thou say nothing to any man." Perhaps this prohibition was given so as to keep the excitement from running too high. People do not weigh evidence nor think seriously when excited. Healing a leper was a new kind of miracle, and each new kind of miracle seemed to create new excitement. Jesus would have the people to think soberly on what he was doing and teaching. "Go show thyself to the priest." When a leper was thought to be cured, he had to be inspected by the priest to see if he had been really cured. If all evidence of leprosy was gone, the person was required to make certain offerings. He was required to wash his clothes, shave off his hair, and bathe himself in water. He was then to remain out of the camp seven days, and then repeat the shaving and washing. This was a legal cleansing of the one who had already been cured. (Lev. 14: 1-32.) The cure, the real cleansing, and the legal cleansing were two different matters. For this man to go through the procedure required would be evidence that he was clean and whole. No one need fear him.

The Leper Publishes His Cure (Verse 45)

The man was so full of enthusiasm and rejoicing over his cure that he began to publish it abroad, though Jesus had strictly charged him to tell no one what had been done. So much excitement was created that Jesus could not openly enter into any city. The crowds would become so great in a city as to be beyond control; neither would there be any gathering place for such throngs of people. Hence, for a time he remained in desert places, that is, he stayed out in the open country. There were no such places in Galilee as are now called deserts. The people went out to him. If great crowds went out to him they had plenty of room. "And they came to him from every quarter."

SOME REFLECTIONS

Sickness and death come to men as a result of sin. Death is more than a dream; and sin is not merely a "delusion of the mortal

mind," but is a deadly reality. Yet in the face of our own sickness and suffering, and in the face of the universal experience of the human family, the reality of disease and death is denied by some.

Jesus recognized the fact of sickness and death—so much so that he was moved with compassion at the sight of human suffering. "And he came forth, and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick." (Matt. 14: 14.) When Jesus saw the widow of Nain weeping for her only son whom friends were carrying out to bury, "he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not." Then he raised her son from the dead, and restored him to her sound and well.

Compassion for the suffering is one of the noblest traits of human character, and it is a calamity when one's religion robs him of it, and replaces it with a feeling of disgust at the sufferer for imagining himself to be suffering from sickness and pain. Jesus had no such feelings toward the sick and suffering people; neither is he the author of any religion that engenders such feelings.

If there is no real sickness, no real bodily ailments nor injuries, then Jesus performed no real miracles. Yet the Bible asserts in the most positive terms that Jesus healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, restored sight to the blind, made the maimed whole, and raised the dead. It is a pity that any one can find it in his heart to deny such things. To deny the reality of disease and bodily afflictions is to deny the discoveries of science relative to diseases and their causes. To deny the reality of sickness and bodily injuries is to deny the evidence of our own senses, our own consciousness. If we deny these, how can we know anything? If we deny the reality of sickness and bodily injuries, we deny the plain statements of the word of God. A man's thinking is terribly warped when he professes to believe the word of God, and yet deny its plain statements. A theory that denies the reality of death and the resurrection denies the very foundation of all our hopes.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The reality of sin.

The reality of sickness and death.

The purpose of miracles in connection with preaching and prophesying.

How we can imitate Jesus.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
Give probable origin of synagogues.
Give facts about desert places.
Discuss the attitude of Jesus toward human suffering.
What was his chief mission to earth?
What purposes did miracles serve?

Verses 29-31

Where was Jesus at the close of our last lesson?

Into whose house did he now enter?
Tell about the miracle he performed.

Verses 32-34

What happened at sunset?
Why did they wait till sunset?
How had the Jews made additions to the law?
In what way were they inconsistent about their observance of the Sabbath?
What miracles did Jesus perform that evening?

Verse 35

Where did Jesus go, and why?

Why do people pray?
Think up some things that hinder
people from praying.

Verses 36-39

Who followed Jesus to the place of
prayer?
What did they report?
What did Jesus say?
Why not return immediately to
Capernaum?

Verses 40-42

What did the leper say to Jesus?
What does his question seem to
imply?
Why should he feel that Jesus would
take no account of him?

What did Jesus do and say?
What was required of lepers?
Give the laws concerning leprosy.

Verses 43, 44

What did Jesus tell the man not to
do?
What did he tell the man to do?
Discuss the laws of cleansing found
in Lev. 14: 1-23.

Verse 45

What did the leper do?
What was the result?
What did the people do?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson V—January 30, 1938

MINISTERING TO SPIRITUAL NEEDS

Mark 2: 1-12

1 And when he entered again into Capernaum after some days, it was
noised that he was in the house.

2 And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room
for them, no, not even about the door: and he spake the word unto them.

3 And they come, bringing unto him a man sick of the palsy, borne of four.

4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the crowd, they
uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they
let down the bed whereon the sick of the palsy lay.

5 And Jesus seeing their faith saith unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy
sins are forgiven.

6 But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their
hearts,

7 Why doth this man thus speak? he blasphemeth: who can forgive sins
but one, even God?

8 And straightway Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they so reasoned
within themselves, saith unto them, Why reason ye these things in your
hearts?

9 Which is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven;
or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to
forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy),

11 I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house.

12 And he arose, and straightway took up the bed, and went forth before
them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying,
We never saw it on this fashion.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Son, thy sins are forgiven.” (Mark 2: 5.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 32: 1-7.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

January 24.	M.	Healing and Forgiving (Mark 2: 1-12)
January 25.	T.	God Knows Our Needs (Matt. 6: 5-8)
January 26.	W.	God Supplies Every Need (Psalm 23: 1-6)
January 27.	T.	Salvation Freely Offered (Isa. 55: 1-7)
January 28.	F.	Jesus Forgives a Sinner (Luke 7: 36-48)
January 29.	S.	God's Purpose and Grace (Tim. 1: 7-14)
January 30.	S.	Deliverance from Sin (Psalm 32: 1-7)

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 9: 2-8; Luke 5: 18-26.

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—A.D. 28.

Place.—Capernaum. Capernaum was situated on the northwest coast of the Sea of Galilee. It was an important city at the time of the personal ministry of Jesus. Here Jesus made his home after the people of Nazareth sought to kill him. (Matt. 4: 12, 13; 9: 1; Luke 4: 27-31.) Jesus did much teaching in Capernaum, and did many mighty works there. To us it seems that the whole city would have believed on him, and remained faithful to him. But evidently their enthusiasm for him waned, for Jesus later said, "And thou Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? thou shalt go down unto Hades: for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in thee, it would have remained until this day." (Matt. 11: 23.) But all that now remains of proud Capernaum is a heap of stones, and of two such heaps it is not definitely known which is that of Capernaum.

Persons.—Jesus, a palsied man, certain scribes, and the multitudes. The scribes were sometimes called lawyers. "They had the care of the law; it was their duty to make transcripts of it; they also expounded its difficulties, and taught its doctrines, and so performed several functions which are now distributed among different professions, being keepers of the records, consulting lawyers, authorized expounders of Holy Writ, and, finally, schoolmasters—thus blending together in one character the several elements of intellectual, moral, social and religious influence. It scarcely needs to be added that their powers were very great."—*The Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia and Scriptural Dictionary*.

Lesson Links.—Jesus performed many physical cures, but his mission was to save people from sin and to prepare them for habitation with God. He came to seek the lost, to call sinners to repentance, to give rest to the weary, to give eternal life to those who would follow him to the end. He begins to emphasize this feature of his mission in today's lesson.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Jesus Again in Capernaum (Verses 1, 2)

Our last lesson closed with Jesus preaching in the country, because the people had become so excited over his healing the leper that he could not enter openly into a city. "And when he entered again into Capernaum after some days, it was noised that he was in the house." For "in the house" the marginal reading has "at home." He had entered into the city quietly, not "openly." He must have come into the city at night, else people would have seen him enter. Doubtless he had come home to rest, but not for long did he remain in quietness. The first neighbor that saw him would be sure to blaze it abroad. "And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, no, not even about the door: and he spake the word unto them." In those days physicians were scarce and their methods of treating the sick were crude; but now there was one in their midst who, with a word, healed their sick, cast out demons, made the blind to see, the lame to walk, and had no failures marked up against him. It was natural, therefore, for the people to

be carried away with tremendous enthusiasm for one who was doing so many great things for them. Jesus took advantage of their interest in what he was doing, and preached to them what they should do. The people had become so interested in what Jesus was doing that they were losing sight of their own obligations. It is even now easy for people to study so much about what the Lord has done and will do, that they forget to think anything about what they should do, or that they should do anything. We should know that the Lord does his part promptly and thoroughly, if we do our part faithfully. Let us praise God for what he does, and show our appreciation by faithful service.

A Palsied Man Brought to Jesus (Verses 3, 4)

"And they come, bringing unto him a man sick of the palsy, borne of four." The term "palsy" seems to have been applied to the loss of motion or feeling, of any part of the body, no matter what might have been the cause. This man was so paralyzed as to be helpless. Nothing is said as to what caused his helplessness. Matthew and Luke tell us that they brought him on a bed. Such helplessness, with the suffering of body and mind that accompanied it, is pitiful. And no one likes to be such a burden to his family and friends. This man had friends that sympathized with him and did what they could for him. They could minister to him in his helplessness, but could not heal him. Now they learn of one who they believe can cure even the palsy.

Difficulties Overcome.—Jesus was in his home. They could not bring the palsied man to Jesus through the door, for the crowd was so dense as to block the door. To us it seems that the people would have made it possible for the man to be carried in through the door. Frequently people are not as considerate as they should be. Less resolute souls than these four friends might have given up, but not these. The failure of the crowd to show any interest in their helpless friend did not discourage these men. If there was no way open, they would open up a way. There must have been a stairway on the outside leading up to the roof. It is a difficult thing to carry a helpless man up a flight of stairs, but these men had their hearts set on a certain goal. When they found it impossible to carry him through the door, they carried the palsied man up the stairs to the top of the house, removed some of the roof, and let the palsied man down through the hole into the presence of Jesus. These were men of great determination, and their persistence in the face of difficulties showed how much regard they had for their friend and also how much faith they had in the power and willingness of Jesus to heal all manner of diseases. They showed their faith by their works.

Jesus Forgives Sins (Verses 5-9)

"And Jesus seeing their faith." They made their faith visible by action. Action is the only way in which people can show their faith. The faith of these men was strong enough to overcome difficulties, but there is no indication that they believed Jesus to be the Christ. They believed he had power to heal disease; but they likely thought of him only as a great prophet of God. It is likely that the palsied

man showed his faith by his confident, hopeful look. The first thing Jesus said to the man must have been a surprise to these men as well as to all others who heard him, "Son, thy sins are forgiven." Matthew records Jesus as saying, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven." The admonition, "Be of good cheer," carried with it the promise of better things for the sick man. But the man had not been brought that his sins might be forgiven. Can sins be forgiven where there is no repentance? Jesus could look into the heart of that man and see what was there, as well as he could see what was in the hearts of the scribes. He must have seen that the man was penitent, else he would not have said, "Thy sins are forgiven." The final outcome shows that the man received more than he and his friends hoped he would receive, for they had evidently expected no more than that he would be relieved of his physical ailment. It does not appear that Jesus had previous to this claimed to have power to forgive sins. But let this thought sink into your hearts: Faith only would have left the palsied man at home in his palsied condition and in his sins, and faith only today will leave a sinner where he is and in his sins. "Faith apart from works is dead."

Scribes Present.—"There were certain of the scribes sitting there." Luke says, "There were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by." The Pharisees were a sect of the Jews. They were very strict in conforming to the forms of the law and also to the traditions of the elders. Because they were skilled expounders of the law the scribes were called also lawyers, sometimes, doctors of the law. It seems that they were usually Pharisees. Naturally the scribes and Pharisees would feel hostile toward any teacher who had not been trained in their schools, and who was not sanctioned by the authorities in Jerusalem. Jesus was so active as a teacher, and his fame had become so widely spread, that these men felt that they must look into matters. So, on this occasion, "there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, who were come out of every village of Galilee and Judaea and Jerusalem." Likely those from Jerusalem and Judaea had been sent down by the authorities to inquire into this new teaching. The events of this day developed the first real antagonism of these leaders toward Jesus. If they had not been friendly, they at least had not been active in their opposition to him. On this occasion, though they were keeping quiet, they were "reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak? he blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but one, even God?" "The scribes were right in charging him with blasphemy, if he were not the Son of God. He doubtless made the remark for the purpose of framing the issue, and thereby preparing his hearers for the demonstration which followed."—*McGarvey*. If he could forgive sins, then he was God manifest in the flesh; if he could not forgive sins, then he was an impostor and a blasphemous impostor.

Jesus Questions His Critics.—Jesus had accurately read the unspoken thoughts of his critics, and they must have been astonished when his words showed that he had done so. "Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?" So far as the mere pronouncing of the words is con-

cerned, it was as easy to say the one as the other. Evidently Jesus meant, which is easier, to forgive sins or to cure the palsy? It would be as impossible for a man without God's power to cure the palsy as to forgive sins. A miracle wrought through a man proved that God was with him; it was a sign that God was with the man. Even the bigoted scribes and Pharisees should have known this, and also that God would not be with a blasphemer. Nicodemus expressed the truth when he said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." (John 3: 2.) Jesus would, therefore, cure the man, and thereby prove that he was neither a blasphemer nor an impostor.

The Palsied Man Healed (Verses 10-12)

"But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins"—that they might know, at least have proof—that he was no blasphemer, he turned his attention to the sick man and said, "I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house." Try to visualize that scene. It was a tense moment. A great crowd of people, some interested and some merely curious, were present. Jesus, calm and assured, stood in their midst. The antagonism of the scribes and his ready reply to their thoughts would further put the people "on edge." Do not forget the four friends on the roof, most likely sprawled out on the roof with their faces over the hole in the roof, anxiously listening and watching to see the outcome. Will the sick man be cured? Will he be able to do as bidden? "And he arose, and straightway took up the bed, and went forth before them all." And thus Jesus demonstrated before them all that God was with him, and that he was therefore not a blasphemous impostor. The feeling of suspense that gripped all gave way to a feeling of amazement, "insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion." It appears that the critical scribes and Pharisees were so astounded at what they had seen that they could say nothing.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Sin is an awful reality. Its devastating effects are seen everywhere. Its awfulness is seen even in what it does for the sinner himself. So often it robs him of business, health, friends, peace of mind, and self-respect, and makes of him a veritable demon. Sin cost the lifeblood of Christ.

Jesus healed all manner of diseases; but he did not come to earth merely to cure sick folks. He came to save sinners, and the miracles he performed proved him to be from God. The pretended miracle workers and faith healers of today fail utterly to comprehend the purpose of miracles.

We cannot perform miracles, but we can do much to relieve human suffering. We can demonstrate before a critical and unbelieving world that our religion is helpful and uplifting, and therefore divine. Let the scoffer and unbeliever sit down and try to figure out just what condition the world would now be in if Jesus had never come to earth, or if no one were now teaching and practicing his precepts.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The awfulness of sin as seen in—
 What it does to the sinner himself.
 What it does to the innocent.
 What it cost to redeem sinners.
 The final doom of the sinner.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
 Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
 Give information about Capernaum.
 What did Jesus later say of Capernaum?
 Tell about scribes and Pharisees.
 What was the main purpose of Christ's coming?

Verses 1, 2

Why would Jesus not enter a city openly?
 What is said of the crowds at Capernaum?
 In what were they mainly interested?
 What use did Jesus make of their interest?

Verses 3, 4

What was the palsy?
 How was this palsied man brought?

How did these friends show their faith?

Verses 5-9

In what way is faith seen?
 What did Jesus first say to the palsied man?
 Why was not this what they expected?
 What would have been the results of faith only?
 Discuss the worthlessness of faith only.
 Why were the scribes there?
 Whence had they come?
 What did they think in their hearts?
 How did Jesus show that he knew their thoughts?
 What did miracles prove?

Verses 10-12

How did Jesus prove that he was no impostor?
 What effect did the miracle have on the people?
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VI—February 6, 1938

CHALLENGING THE SOCIAL ORDER

Mark 2: 13-22

13 And he went forth again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.

14 And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the place of toll, and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.

15 And it came to pass, that he was sitting at meat in his house, and many publicans and sinners sat down with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many, and they followed him.

16 And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with the sinners and publicans, said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?

17 And when Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

18 And John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting: and they come and say unto him, Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?

19 And Jesus said unto them, Can the sons of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

20 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day.

21 No man seweth a piece of undressed cloth on an old garment: else that which should fill it up taketh from it, the new from the old, and a worse rent is made.

22 And no man putteth new wine into old wine-skins; else the wine will burst the skins, and the wine perisheth, and the skins: but *they put new wine into fresh wine-skins.*

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.*” (Mark 2: 17.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 65: 21-25.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

January	31.	M.	Jesus and Accepted Social Standards (Mark 2: 13-17)
February	1.	T.	Jesus Demands a New Social Order (Mark 2: 18-22)
February	2.	W.	Christianity in the Family (1 Cor. 5: 1-8)
February	3.	T.	Christianity and the State (Luke 20: 21-26)
February	4.	F.	Christianity and the Races (Acts 8: 27-38)
February	5.	S.	The Royal Law of Love (James 2: 1-10)
February	6.	S.	A New Social Order (Isa. 65: 17, 21-25)

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 9: 9-17; Luke 5: 18-38.

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—A.D. 28.

Place.—In the house of Levi at Capernaum. Much of the activities of Jesus centered around Capernaum. It was at this time the home of Peter, Andrew, James, and John, and also of Levi.

Persons.—Jesus, Levi and other disciples of Jesus, publicans, and sinners, scribes and Pharisees, and John's disciples. Publicans were Roman tax collectors. Sinners were Jews who had been turned out of synagogues, or who, for some reason, were debarred from membership in synagogues, and hence were religious and social outcasts. A disciple is a learner—one who adheres to some leader or to some school of thought. John's disciples were the people who adhered to John as their teacher.

Lesson Links.—The law of Moses was given to regulate the entire life of the Jew. To this law they had from time to time added certain refinements or requirements, which they called the traditions of the elders, and which they regarded as equal, or even superior, to the law of Moses. The law and these traditions covered the entire life and activities of the Jew, home, social, business, and political. Jesus paid no attention to the traditions of the elders. The social requirements of these traditions meant nothing to him. It seems that Jesus ignored the social order bound on the Jews by their traditions. He said little, or nothing, about the social order as required by traditions; he merely proceeded as if no such social order existed.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Matthew Called (Verses 13, 14)

The crowds became too large for comfort in Capernaum, and again Jesus went out into the open country—this time, to the seaside—to teach the increasing multitudes. Here the multitudes came to him and he taught them. Jesus worked miracles as cases came to him, but his main work was teaching and preaching. Apparently, the tax collector's office was by the roadside, near the seashore. Levi, who also bore the name Matthew, was in charge of this office. Jesus called Levi to follow him. We would not understand that Levi

started out the very moment Jesus called him. He had a responsible position, and would certainly make arrangements for some one to take his place. He would also have to give proper account of the affairs of his office. But his decision to follow Jesus was prompt and final. We can be sure that he lost no time in setting things in order so that he could follow Jesus. When he became a believer in Christ we are not told, but Jesus was no stranger to him at this time, else Levi would not have followed him. A man fit to become an apostle would not have followed one of whom he knew nothing; nor would Jesus have had him do so.

Levi Makes a Feast for Jesus (Verses 15-17)

In Luke 5: 27, 28 we read: "And after these things he went forth, and beheld a publican, named Levi, sitting at the place of toll, and said unto him, Follow me. And he forsook all, and rose up and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his house; and there was a great multitude of publicans and of others that were sitting at meat with them." Matthew says, "Many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples." It would require much food and many helpers to feed a multitude of people. Levi, or Matthew, made that feast in honor of Jesus. Perhaps his object in inviting the publicans and sinners to his feast was twofold. They were his associates, and he naturally wanted to entertain them in his home; and being a disciple of Jesus, he wanted his associates to become better acquainted with Jesus and to hear more of his teaching. With the Jews, if a man was a member of a synagogue he was not classed as a sinner; and a sinner was not necessarily a wicked man. If he did not conform to the forms of the law nor keep the traditions of the elders, he was turned out of the synagogue—he was a sinner. Such a man was a religious outcast. To be a religious outcast among the Jews was also to be a social outcast. The scribes and Pharisees would not eat at the same table with such a man. To touch a man of that sort was to become unclean. Such were their feelings and deep-seated prejudices. Even with this in mind we can have but a faint idea of the shock they experienced when they saw Jesus sitting at meat with sinners. Especially would they be shocked at his eating with publicans, who, in their estimation, had become so low as to collect taxes off their own people to support the hated Roman government. Of course these scribes and Pharisees were not eating at Matthew's table; they would not so much as enter such a man's house.

Jesus Explains.—These scribes did not voice their protest to Jesus, but asked his disciples for an explanation of his conduct. "When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." Jesus did not mean that his critics were sound spiritually so as not to need him, or that they were righteous; but for the purpose of meeting their criticism he took them at their own valuation. Jesus came to cure the morally sick; he came to call sinners to repentance. To do so, he had to come into contact with such characters. Besides, before he could benefit people, they must realize their need of him. These scribes and Pharisees felt thoroughly well and righteous. Jesus did not come to call such people; yet

no one needed him more than they did. No other class of people was ever so severely denounced by Jesus as were these scribes and Pharisees. Those who think Jesus was always mild and persuasive of speech should read what he said of these men as recorded in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew.

The Question About Fasting (Verse 18)

"And John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting: and they come and say unto him, Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?" John had already been cast into prison; and though John had pointed Jesus out as the Messiah, not all of his disciples had become followers of Jesus. The parallel passage in Matthew says the disciples of John asked this question; Luke represents the Pharisees as asking it. Mark clears up the seeming discrepancy by saying that the disciples of John and the Pharisees both asked the question. Besides, it is evident that these disciples of John were also classed as Pharisees. However, there is no evidence that John's disciples felt any enmity toward Jesus; neither does it seem that the scribes and Pharisees had at this time become very hostile toward him. Apparently both classes were sincere in asking the question. The Jews had established certain fast days. They felt that these traditional fast days were binding upon all Jews. Levi had made his great feast on one of these days that tradition had established as a day for fasting. Of course John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting on that day, and it seemed to them as a thing entirely out of place for Jesus, as a religious teacher and leader, to disregard an established religious custom, and to be feasting while others were fasting. As it appeared that they asked the question, not in criticism, but in sincerity, so Jesus, in his reply, treated the question with due consideration, and answered them with patience.

Jesus Gives Answer (Verses 19-22)

No Occasion for Fasting.—"And Jesus said unto them, Can the sons of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast." With the possible exception of the great day of atonement, it does not seem that any days of fasting were set apart in the law of Moses. The number of fast days were established by human authority. Of course, any individual might set aside certain days for fasting, but he had no right to require others to observe his fast days. It is said that "fasting has, in all ages and among all nations, been practiced in times of mourning, sorrow, and affliction." But Jesus was with his disciples, they were rejoicing in their happy lot, and there was no occasion for fasting. Jesus did not object to voluntary fasting; in fact, he gave regulations governing such fastings (Matt. 6: 16-18); but for him and his disciples to fast when there was no occasion for it except to comply with a regulation made by man would have been to honor man-made laws and to recognize men's right to impose religious duties and ceremonies on their fellow men. To have done so would have been to enthrone man on an equality with Jehovah, and to sacrifice a fundamental principle, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

The Time for Fasting.—"But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day." Jesus was the bridegroom. He was then with his disciples; therefore they were not fasting. Jesus here refers to the time in which he would be put to death. Sorrow and a feeling of despair would then flood their souls. In hours of great mental or emotional stress desire for food passes away. It is natural then to fast. Such an experience was in store for these happy disciples; they would then fast, and it would be mere ceremony. It would not be a fasting imposed upon them by their religious leaders.

Undressed Cloth and Old Garments.—"No man seweth a piece of undressed cloth on an old garment: else that which should fill it up taketh from it, the new from the old, and a worse rent is made." Undressed cloth was unfulled cloth; cloth that had not been shrunk by wetting and heating. Such cloth used to patch an old garment would shrink and make a worse rent than it patched. It would be foolish to do that; and it would be just as foolish for the disciples to fast when there was no occasion for it. Some have fancied that Jesus meant by this illustration that no piece of the old law was to be patched on to his new religion, but that application of his language cannot be correct. In the first place, Jesus said that his disciples could not fast then, but that the time would come when they would fast. Are we to understand that Jesus was saying that the disciples could not tack a part of the old law on his religion while he was with them, but that it would be proper for them to do so after he was taken away? The thought is absurd. In the second place that application of his illustration reverses his illustration. Jesus was talking about putting new cloth on old garments, not putting a piece of the old garment, the old law, on his new garment, his new teaching. The application in question misses the facts entirely. The fast days were no part of the law of Moses, but inventions, or innovations, of their own making. Surely we are not to understand Jesus as saying that the disciples could not tack human inventions on his teaching while he lived, but when he was taken away it would be proper and right for them to do so!

Wine and Wineskins.—"And no man putteth new wine into old wine-skins; else the wine will burst the skins, and the wine perisheth, and the skins: but they put new wine into fresh wine-skins." These "wine-skins" were usually goatskins made so as to hold liquids. "Such bottles, being more portable and less breakable than earthenware, were peculiarly well suited to primitive and nomad people, as they are to the roving Bedouins of today."—*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. There would be some fermentation in new wine. It would be safe, however, to put new wine into new wineskins, for they would stretch as the new wine fermented; but old wineskins, already stretched, dry, and brittle, would burst under the pressure.

The Lesson.—As already suggested, some have thought that the old cloth represented the old law, and that the new cloth represented the teaching of Christ. They also think the old wine and the old wineskins represented the old law and that the new wine and new wineskins represented the teaching of Christ, and that it was not safe to mix the two. Others have thought that Jesus was con-

trasting the corrupted religion of the Pharisees with his own pure religion, and that the two should not be mixed. But such positions are not at all tenable. Jesus was not contrasting the law and the gospel, nor the corrupt religion of the Pharisees with his religion. Nor did Jesus say that his disciples refrained from fasting because fasting belonged to the old order or the corrupt religion of the Pharisees. The reason he gave for their not fasting was the fact that he was with them, but that they would fast when he was taken away. That involves the absurdity of representing him as saying that his disciples could not safely mix the old order of the corrupt religion of the Pharisees with his religion while he was with them, but that they could safely do so after he was taken away. Besides, to argue that the old things mentioned represent either the law or the corrupt religion of the Pharisees and the new things mentioned represent the religion of Christ is to represent him as saying that the old law or the corrupt religion of the Pharisees was better than his religion; for, in Luke's account, Jesus immediately adds, "And no man having drunk old wine desireth new; for he saith, The old is good," or "better." What then is the point? Simply that for his disciples to fast while he was with them would be as foolish and absurd as to put a new patch on an old garment or to put new wine into old wineskins.

SOME REFLECTIONS

People must eat, and it is not wrong to have an orderly feast, especially when there is an opportunity to bring people under the right kind of influence and teaching, as Levi evidently sought to do.

Jesus does not call people who feel righteous and self-sufficient, but he calls those who feel the burden of sin and who desire rest from doubts and fears. Hear him: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11: 28.) No others are invited, for no others would come.

The Pharisees put more stress on the traditions of the elders than they did on the written law. They claimed that these traditions were laws delivered orally by Moses, and handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth, but that could not have been done. If that had been so, Jesus would have respected them; instead, he called them the commandments of men. He told them plainly that teaching these things made their worship vain. But they were not so different from people of all other times. When men make additions of their own to the religion of Christ, they hold them in higher regard than they hold the commandments of Christ. They, like the Pharisees, will make void the commandments of God in order to keep their traditions. (See Matt. 15: 1-9.)

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
What is a disciple?
Who were publicans?
What had the Jews added to the law?

How did they regard these additions?
How did Jesus treat them?

Verses 13, 14

Why would Jesus go out of town to teach?
Whom did he call?
Why could not Levi have afforded to go at the moment of call?

Is there any evidence that he was already a disciple?

Verses 15-17

What additional fact does Luke give?
Who attended that feast?
Why should Matthew have invited so many to his feast?
Whom did the Jews class as sinners?
What was their attitude toward these sinners?
What question did they raise?
What answer did Jesus give?
Why did he so answer his critics?
Give some things Jesus later said about the scribes and Pharisees.

Verse 18

What other question was raised?
Who asked the question?
Why was the question asked?

Verses 19-22

Why did not the disciples of Christ then fast?

When would they fast?

Why did the Jews observe fast days?

When is fasting natural and appropriate?

What evidence that Jesus did not object to voluntary fasting?

Why would not Jesus observe the Jewish days of fasting?

What did Jesus say about new cloth and old garments?

What explanation do some give of this verse?

Why is the explanation wrong?

What did Jesus mean?

What did he say about wine and wineskins?

What applications do some make of this language?

Why are such applications wrong?

What is the real lesson in these illustrations?

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VII—February 13, 1938

JESUS AND THE SABBATH

Mark 2: 23 to 3: 6

23 And it came to pass, that he was going on the sabbath day through the grainfields; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears.

24 And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?

25 And he said unto them, Did ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was hungry, he, and they that were with him?

26 How he entered into the house of God when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the showbread, which it is not lawful to eat save for the priests, and gave also to them that were with him?

27 And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:

28 So that the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath.

1 And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there who had his hand withered.

2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.

3 And he saith unto the man that had his hand withered, Stand forth.

4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth; and his hand was restored.

6 And the Pharisees went out, and straightway with the Herodians took counsel against him, how they might destroy him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man."* (Mark 2: 27.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 122.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

February 7. M. The Sabbath for Man (Mark 2: 23-28)
February 8. T. The Sabbath for Service (Mark 3: 1-6)
February 9. W. The Sanctity of the Sabbath (Ex. 31: 12-18)

February 10.	T.	The Sabbath and the Nation (Jer. 17: 24-27)
February 11.	F.	Sabbath Occupations (Acts 16: 10-18)
February 12.	S.	Sabbath Sophistries (Luke 13: 10-17)
February 13.	S.	The Sabbath for Worship (Psalm 122: 1-9)

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 12: 1-14; Luke 6: 1-11.

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—A.D. 28, or the early part of A.D. 29.

Places.—Grainfields and a synagogue. In Palestine much land was sown to wheat and barley. Maize, or Indian corn, the grain we in America know as corn, was not then known in Palestine. It appears that the land produced wheat and barley in abundance.

Persons.—Jesus, his disciples, the Pharisees, and a man with a withered hand. The Pharisees were the most influential sect of the Jews. They were very strict in observing the forms of the law, and they held the traditions of the elders in great reverence. Outwardly they appeared to be all that men should be, but they were generally corrupt in heart. They were exact in their teaching, but loose in their living. "They say, and do not."

Lesson Links.—The last day of the week, the day we call Saturday, was the Hebrew Sabbath. "The seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God." (Ex. 20: 10.) This Sabbath law was given to the Hebrews, and to no one else. Said Jehovah to the children of Israel, "Verily ye shall keep my sabbaths: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; . . . it is holy unto you. . . . Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath. . . . It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever." (Ex. 31: 12-17.) The Sabbath was holy to Israel, and they were commanded to keep it. If the whole world had been commanded to keep the Sabbath, it could not have been a sign between Jehovah and the Israelites. Again, "And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm: therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day." (Deut. 5: 15.) The law of the Sabbath ended at the cross. (Eph. 2: 14-16; Col. 2: 13-15.) It would therefore be wrong for us to attempt to conserve the Sabbath, inasmuch as Jehovah himself abrogated it.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Pharisees Question Jesus (Verses 23, 24)

"And it came to pass, that he was going on the sabbath day through the grainfields; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears." Luke says, "His disciples plucked the ears, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands." The roads passing through the fields were not separated from the tilled land by fences; so it was an easy matter for the disciples, "as they went, to pluck the ears." It does not seem that any one could have found fault with their seemingly innocent actions. It is true that the law prohibited work on the Sabbath, but it does not seem that what these disciples were doing could be classed as work. However, the Pharisees asked Jesus, "Why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?" They

could not question the right of the disciples to eat a few handfuls of grain as they passed through the fields, for the law plainly said, "When thou comest into thy neighbor's standing grain, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thy hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbor's standing grain." (Deut. 23: 25.) Though there was nothing in the original Sabbath law that condemned what the disciples were doing, yet the Pharisees considered their actions a violation of the Sabbath. Through the centuries the Jewish leaders had added certain definitions and limitations not found in the law of Moses. The law prohibited a journey on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders made a regulation as to how far one might go on the Sabbath, and called the distance a Sabbath day's journey. The law also, in prohibiting work on the Sabbath, of course, prohibited reaping and threshing, but the Jews had so refined that law as to make plucking the ears a sort of reaping and the rubbing the grains out a sort of threshing. The disciples were not really violating the Sabbath law, but were going contrary to the additions the Jews had made to that law. The leaders had strained the Sabbath law beyond all reason. Jesus kept the Sabbath according to the law, for it is plainly stated that he did no sin; yet he did not respect the requirements the Jews had added to that law. The Sabbath law, as well as the rest of the law, was made for man, and did not prohibit deeds of mercy or of necessity.

Jesus Replies to the Pharisees (Verses 25-28)

"And he said unto them, Did ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was hungry, he, and they that were with him?" There is in this question a severe rebuke to these interpreters and guardians of the law for their ignorance of its real application. David and those with him had eaten the showbread, "which it is not lawful to eat, save for the priests." The imperative need overrode the plain law respecting the showbread. (For an account of this incident read 1 Sam. 21: 1-6.) Did not the disciples have the same need that David had? Why, then, be so inconsistent as to excuse David and yet condemn these disciples? Besides, the disciples were not really violating God's law concerning the Sabbath; but Jesus did not raise this point—he answered his critics as if the disciples had really violated the Sabbath law, as the Pharisees charged. "And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." Man needed one day in seven for rest and meditation; to meet that need the Sabbath was given; but that law was never intended to be enforced to the injury of man. There is no proof that the Sabbath day was changed from the seventh day to the first day of the week, yet in an important sense the Lord's day serves a similar purpose. If it is devoted to the Lord in a manner true to its name, selfish pleasure and business will be laid aside on that day. The words in the Greek really mean, "a day devoted to the Lord," just as Lord's Supper means "a supper devoted to the Lord." Hence, the Lord's day should not be used as a common day, any more than the Lord's Supper should be used as a common meal. They are the Lord's, not ours.

The Sabbath Controversy Continued (Mark 3: 1-4)

"And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there who had his hand withered." Luke tells us that the man's right hand was withered. Perhaps this was said to emphasize the inconvenience of the man's affliction.

The Enemies Present.—The scribes and the Pharisees were becoming more antagonistic. They had reached the point where they were not looking for any good in Jesus, but for grounds on which they might take legal action against him. "And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him." They could find no grounds for action against him in the grainfields incident; for it was the disciples, not he, that plucked the ears and rubbed them out with their hands. But his defense of his disciples, being a reflection on his critics, left them in a worse humor, and more determined than ever to find something against him. They expected him to relieve suffering wherever he found it; so they were watching him. Their tradition made it illegal to practice the healing art on the Sabbath. But they must have feared that Jesus would not see the man with the withered hand; so, according to Matthew, they asked Jesus, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? that they might accuse him." But did the healing, performed in the manner it was, furnish anything for which they might accuse him? That every one might see plainly what was done, Jesus said to the man. "Stand forth." He would have the man out in full view of all.

A Searching Question.—"And he saith unto them, Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to kill?" That question must have startled these spies; for they had come to do Jesus harm, to find him guilty of something for which they could kill him. They did not expect to be caught in such a trap. If Jesus cured the man, he would be doing a good deed to the man, and saving a life to usefulness. Now, his point was, which is right? They could not answer him without condemning themselves. If they said it was right to do good on the Sabbath day, they would clear Jesus of the charge they expected to make against him; if they said it was wrong for him to do good on the Sabbath day and right to do harm on that day, they would make out a worse case against themselves. It is no wonder that "they held their peace." And their silence angered Jesus. For all the Pharisees cared, the man might go on in his affliction. All they wanted out of the occasion was a chance to accuse Jesus of breaking the Sabbath law. Being angered at such perversity and grieved that men could so sell themselves to do evil, Jesus gazed at them for a time, and then dismissed them as unworthy of any further attention, and directed his attention to the afflicted man. To be thus ignored was a blow to their pride.

The Man Is Healed on the Sabbath Day (Verse 5)

"He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand." The man's faith prompted him to do what Jesus said; and, in so doing, he was healed. And so a good deed was done to the man; but who did it? Even if curing a man on the Sabbath had been a crime sufficient to condemn a man in the court, as the Pharisees thought, could

they have found grounds for bringing action against Jesus in this case? If Jesus healed the man, they already had their plans laid to bring action against him; but could they prove that Jesus healed the man? He did not touch the man; neither did he say anything about healing him. He merely told the man to stretch forth his hand, and there was certainly no law against asking a man to stretch forth his hand. Not even their tradition condemned that. There was no way in which they could prove that Jesus healed the man. So far as they knew an invisible spirit direct from heaven might have cured the man. It was a case of their own setting, for the very purpose of finding Jesus guilty of healing a man on the Sabbath day; but he had evaded their trap, and had so managed the whole affair that they knew they could not make out a case against him. They knew also that the way matters had turned out, they were left in a bad light before the people. This further enraged them. Luke says, "They were filled with madness"—actually so enraged that they were put out of their senses. Their own carefully built-up scheme fell down on their own heads. They were so angry now that they decided not to wait for court action.

The Pharisees and Herodians Plot to Kill Jesus (Verse 6)

"And the Pharisees went out, and straightway with the Herodians took counsel against him, how they might destroy him." These Pharisees, having failed in their scheme to find grounds for legal action against Jesus, now plot with the Herodians to murder him. They who had professed such high regard for God's law now plot to commit murder in violation of that law, and they plot with their enemies, the Herodians. Herodians were partisans of the Herods, and favored Roman rule. Pharisees were bitter against what the Herodians favored. Though antagonists, they joined together in this murder scheme. They were united only on their hatred of Jesus. Hatred is a strange basis for union. But that sort of unions are found even today among both religionists and politicians. Gospel preachers meet up with such combinations.

SOME REFLECTIONS

The Pharisees, who were such sticklers for the traditions of the elders, recognized the difference between the written law and the unwritten traditions of the elders, but they held that the traditions were even more sacred and binding than the written law. They would even make void the law that they might keep their traditions. May we not also now make a similar mistake. Men now become so wedded to a custom that they will disobey a plain command of God if they cannot keep their custom.

Loyalty to God's law is commendable, but it may be carried to a point where it becomes fanatical and cruel. The Pharisees allowed no one to practice the arts of healing on the Sabbath day. If a person was sick or wounded on the Sabbath, he must have no medical attention till the Sabbath was past. When a person's religion makes him so fanatical and cruel as that, he should know that there is something radically wrong with his religion. There are extremes. One person may become so exacting on others that he is

a nuisance; another may become so loose and indifferent that he is worthless. A well-balanced Christian character is as rare as it is beautiful.

The Pharisees would care for their stock on the Sabbath, but they would do nothing toward healing the sick and relieving the suffering among men on that day. Likely they were unconsciously influenced by self-interest in making it lawful to care for their stock on the Sabbath. It is hard for men to know just how much self-interest has to do in forming their notions in such matters. A good man made this remark, "While I was making money dealing in futures, it was hard for me to see any wrong in it; but when I met with a series of losses, I decided it was wrong. Then I quit."

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

What the Sabbath law required.

To whom was the Sabbath law given?

What was the penalty for Sabbath law violation?

Is the Sabbath law still in force?

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give the time, places, and persons.
Name the chief grain crops of Palestine.
Give some characteristics of the Pharisees.
What day was the Hebrew Sabbath?
Prove to whom the Sabbath law was given.
Show when the old law ended.

Verses 23, 24

Give the incident of the grainfields.
What question did the Pharisees raise?
What did the law say about eating grain in the fields?
Why did the Pharisees think the disciples were doing an unlawful thing?
What were they really violating?

Verses 25-28

Give the reply Jesus made to the Pharisees.
Give the facts of the incident Jesus mentioned.
What is the lesson from this incident?
Why was the Sabbath given?
Was the Sabbath changed?

Discuss the significance of the Lord's day.

Mark 3: 1-4

On what day did Jesus enter the synagogue?
Why were the Pharisees interested in watching Jesus?
What question did they ask, and why?
What did Jesus say to the man with a withered hand?
What question did Jesus ask the Pharisees?
Why did they not answer him?
How did Jesus feel toward them?

Verse 5

What did Jesus say to the man, and what occurred?
Why could not the Pharisees accuse Jesus of healing the man?
Why did they become so enraged?

Verse 6

What did they then decide to do?
With whom did they make a plot?
What was the attitude of these two classes toward each other?
What was the basis of this combination?
Can you name similar combinations?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VIII—February 20, 1938

CHOOSING COMPANIONS IN SERVICE

Mark 3: 7-19, 31-35

7 And Jesus with his disciples withdrew to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed; and from Judaea.

8 And from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and beyond the Jordan, and about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, hearing what great things he did, came unto him.

9 And he spake to his disciples, that a little boat should wait on him because of the crowd, lest they should throng him:

10 For he had healed many; insomuch that as many as had plagues pressed upon him that they might touch him.

11 And the unclean spirits, whensoever they beheld him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.

12 And he charged them much that they should not make him known.

13 And he goeth up into the mountain, and calleth unto him whom he himself would; and they went unto him.

14 And he appointed twelve, that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,

15 And to have authority to cast out demons:

16 And Simon he surnamed Peter;

17 And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and them he surnamed Boanerges, which is, Sons of thunder:

18 And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon, the Cananaean.

19 And Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

31 And there come his mother and his brethren; and, standing without, they sent unto him, calling him.

32 And a multitude was sitting about him; and they say unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.

33 And he answereth them, and saith, Who is my mother and my brethren?

34 And looking round on them that sat round about him, he saith, Behold, my mother and my brethren!

35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother."* (Mark 3: 35.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 55: 1-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

February 14.	M.	Jesus Chooses the Twelve (Mark 3: 7-19)
February 15.	T.	The Apostles Choose Helpers (Acts 6: 1-6)
February 16.	W.	God Chooses Paul (Acts 9: 10-19)
February 17.	T.	Paul's Helpers (Acts 18: 1-11)
February 18.	F.	God's Family (Mark 3: 31-35)
February 19.	S.	God's Fellow Workers (1 Cor. 3: 1-9)
February 20.	S.	Divine Companionship (Isa. 55: 6-13)

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 10: 2-4; 12: 46-50; Luke 6: 14-19; 8: 19-21.

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 29.

Places.—By the Sea of Galilee, a mountain in Galilee, a house in Capernaum.

Persons.—Jesus, his disciples, his mother and brethren, and the multitudes. From Mark 6: 3 we learn the names of the brothers of Jesus, and we learn that he had sisters also. The notion that Mary had no other child but Jesus is contrary to facts.

Lesson Links.—Our last lesson closed with the statement that the Pharisees left the synagogue in such a fury as to be beside themselves, and that they formed a plot with the Herodians to kill Jesus. Matthew adds this: "And Jesus perceiving it withdrew from thence: and many followed him; and he healed them all, and charged them that they should not make him known."

The purpose Jesus had in view in selecting his apostles should be of more interest to us than any facts concerning their personal history. He selected them that they might first be his companions in his journeys, and then that he might send them forth to preach. They were to be with him that he might teach and train them, and thus fit them for the great work which he had in view for them. Through them the whole plan of human redemption was to be made known, and the cause of the Lord firmly established in the earth.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Growing Fame of Jesus (Verses 7, 8)

As the fame of Jesus grew and spread over the surrounding countries the hostility of the Pharisees increased. Of course, when the plot to destroy Jesus became known, the many thousands who were then so friendly toward Jesus would be stirred with resentment. Such feelings amid so much excitement might lead to serious consequences. It may be that Jesus left the city, and went out by the Sea of Galilee to draw his friends away from the center of excitement, so as to avoid a possible conflict.

The Multitude Grows.—"And a great multitude from Galilee followed; and from Judaea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and beyond the Jordan, and about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, hearing what great things he did, came unto him." Because Jesus was then in Galilee and because the greater part of his work had been done in Galilee, a vast throng would gather about him from the cities of Galilee. It is worthy of note that none had come to him from the near-by province of Samaria. The three divisions of Palestine at that time, beginning at the north and noting them in order, were: Galilee; Samaria, south of Galilee; Judea, south of Samaria. Of course Jerusalem was in Judea. South of Judea lay Idumaea, or Edom, the land of Esau and his descendants. "Beyond the Jordan" was the district of Perea. Tyre and Sidon, cities on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, were a considerable distance to the northwest from the Sea of Galilee. They were not Jewish cities, though, of course, many Jews lived in them. The great multitude of Galileans and the great multitude from the other regions and cities, when brought together, made an immense gathering of people. Their coming from these distant places shows how widely spread the fame of Jesus had become. They came because they had heard "what great things he did." And the report of the great things he was doing was principally spread over these distant countries by word of mouth.

The Great Multitudes Press Upon Him (Verses 9-12)

Jesus saw that the gathering crowds would so press upon him that he could do nothing. "And he spake to his disciples, that a little

boat should wait on him because of the crowd, lest they should throng him." Peter, Andrew, James, and John likely still retained their interest in the boats which they left with Zebedee when they left their fishing business to follow Jesus. Whether they did or not, they would know the men who owned boats. Procuring the use of a boat was an easy matter. "The pressure of the people to hear him often caused discomfort to him, confusion to themselves, and indistinct hearing of his speeches. The small ship enabled him to put a narrow strip of water between him and them, thus removing all occasion for their crowding one another, and securing that quietness which is necessary to thoughtful attention."—*McGarvey*. Jesus did not take these measures to get away from the pressure of the crowds because he did not like people, but these enthusiastic and persistent people, who had followed him out to the sea, were becoming so excited and anxious for cures that they might have pressed upon him beyond endurance, as the next verse shows.

Why They Pressed Upon Him.—"For he had healed many; inasmuch that as many as had plagues pressed upon him that they might touch him." In an effort to see a noted man, people will press upon one another so as to make it very uncomfortable, and sometimes even perilous. Or let a merchant announce a sale, and people will run over one another to be the first to enter the store. But here was a greater cause for excitement—a person whose cures had made him famous throughout Palestine and adjoining countries. Likely various motives had brought this immense throng to Jesus. Some had come to see one who had such great power and had done such great things; others came to be healed of various diseases; others came to bring the more helpless to be cured; perhaps many came to hear and to learn. And "that as many as had plagues"—scourges, perhaps diseases pronounced incurable—"pressed upon him." Hope had sprung up in the hearts of the hopeless. No longer resigned to their fate, they were pressing upon Jesus for cures. Literally, according to the Greek, they fell upon him. So determined were they to secure healing that they were even rude about it, even disregarding the comfort of Jesus whose blessings they sought. The boat would be a convenient and effective means of escaping such unpleasant pressure.

Demon Testimony Not Desired.—Those possessed of unclean spirits fell down before Jesus, crying, "Thou art the Son of God." Some one has said, "It is worthy of notice that the afflicted people 'fell upon Jesus,' but the unclean spirit 'fell down before him'—and this not out of love or devotion, but out of abject fear, dreading lest he should drive them out of the possessed and send them before their time to their destined torments. It is just possible that this homage paid to our Lord may have been an act of cunning—a ruse, as it were, to lead the people to suppose that our Lord was in league with evil spirits." These demons possessed superhuman knowledge and recognized the true nature and mission of Jesus, but Jesus would have none of their testimony. Our faith must be better than that of demons. "Thou believest that God is one; thou doest well: the demons also believe, and shudder." (James 2: 19.) They believed and shuddered; we must believe and obey.

Jesus Appoints Twelve Apostles (Verses 13-15)

Not much could be done in such a crowd as had gathered about Jesus except to heal their sick and to preach to them; and not much effective preaching could be done to such a multitude of people who were so interested in the healing of their bodies. To attend to an important and pressing business, Jesus selected a desired group of disciples to go with him, and leaving the multitudes he went up into a mountain. It was not a matter that then concerned the multitudes; and their presence would cause confusion, and would disturb the solemnity of the occasion. From his disciples who had been with him so much in his journeys he selected twelve men whom he called apostles. They were to be his apostles—men whom he was to send out to preach his gospel. An apostle is one who is sent. They had been with him long enough to prove their character, but they needed additional teaching and training—teaching and training in a more intimate and personal way. No set of men ever had such a teacher as these men now had, and no group of men had ever gone into training for such an important work. Little did they then know what was before them in the work for which Jesus selected them. They were to have power to work miracles. Matthew reports that he “gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.” By these miracles they would be enabled to prove that God was with them and that their preaching was true. The miracles would also show that the religion of Christ was intended to do men good and not harm, for the miracles which they were to perform were of a benevolent nature. While men do not now work miracles, all who have imbibed even some of the spirit of Christianity are doing what they can to relieve suffering. Hospitals, asylums, and other benevolent institutions, as well as much individual ministrations, follow the spread of Christianity.

The Names of the Twelve Apostles (Verses 16-19)

In the list of names of the twelve apostles the different writers do not follow the same order. If the student will take the list as given by Matthew, letting the names drop into groups of four, it is easy to memorize the names—Peter and Andrew, James and John; Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Thaddeus; Simon the Cananean and Judas Iscariot.

Simon.—When Andrew brought Simon to Jesus, Jesus said to Simon: “Thou art Simon the son of John; thou shalt be called Cephas.” (John 1: 42.) On account of Peter’s boldness and activity he is often mentioned. His activities were too varied and numerous to be mentioned in the short space allotted to this lesson.

Andrew.—Andrew was Simon Peter’s brother. Perhaps the greatest thing he ever did was the bringing of his brother, Simon, to Jesus. He seems to have been free from selfish ambitions; yet he was practical. As soon as he came into contact with Jesus he went in search of Peter. It was he who found the lad with the loaves and the fishes when the five thousand were fed. Various temperaments are needed in a group of men to give the group effectiveness and proper balance.

James and John.—They were brothers, sons of Zebedee. Jesus surnamed them "Sons of thunder." They must have been of a fiery and tempestuous temperament to merit such a name. And such they were; for when a village of Samaria would not receive Jesus, James and John said: "Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven, and consume them?" (Luke 9: 54.) But the mellowing influence of the life and teachings of Christ made its impress on them.

Philip and Bartholomew.—Very little is said of the activities of these two men. Tradition is too unreliable to depend on as to matters of fact.

Thomas and Matthew.—In Matthew's list of the names of the apostles he still refers to himself as "the publican," long after he had ceased to be a publican. Thomas was also called "Didymus," the twin.

James and Thaddeus.—James is also called "James the less." Of Thaddeus we know very little.

Simon the Cananean and Judas Iscariot.—We should not confuse "Cananean" with "Canaanite." A Cananean was a member of a group, or party, of Zealots—a very patriotic party of Zealots, fiercely opposed to Roman rule. All Bible readers know the fate of Judas Iscariot.

The Mother and Brothers of Jesus (Verses 31-35)

Luke records a number of things which occurred between the selection of the twelve apostles and the incident recorded in this section of our lesson. (See Luke 6: 12 to 8: 21.) Read also the verses that come between the other section of our lesson and this section. The multitudes were so great and insistent that they gave Jesus no time to eat. His friends became uneasy about him. This group of friends, of course, included his mother and his brethren. They said, "He is beside himself." They thought he was so carried away with excitement that he needed somebody to take care of him. His mother and his brothers came to see about him, but the crowd was so dense that they could not enter the house. Some way they got word to him that they wanted to see him. The brothers being mentioned in this connection with his mother is strong indication that they were her sons, and not merely close relatives. To send word to him, calling on him to come out, while he was speaking, seems to have been crude interruption. "It was assuming that the business which they had for him was more urgent than his business with the people, and that the latter should give way to the former."—*McGarvey*. But his reply to the audience showed that he would not be interrupted even by his closest relatives. It also shows that he was not subservient to Mary, and that fact sets aside the grounds upon which the worship of Mary is based. His mother and his brethren are those who do the will of God. In this Jesus puts spiritual relationships equal, if not superior, to fleshly ties. The incident also shows that we should not allow even our close relatives to interfere with our service to God.

SOME REFLECTIONS

A disciple is a learner. Is it not true then, that when a Christian ceases to be a learner, he ceases to be a disciple? Can a person be a Christian and not a disciple? Think on these things.

Reasonable people are influenced by the religion of people whose lives show that their sole purpose is to do good. Your good deeds commend your religion, just as miracles of inspired preachers commended the religion they preached.

Jesus showed in every way that his business was to do the Father's will. When eating would interfere with that business, he did not eat. When his own people tried to interrupt his work, he did not allow them to do so. He left us an example, that we should walk in his steps. Imitate his devotion.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The apostles as witnesses of Christ.

The apostles as preachers.

Their qualifications as preachers.

What a preacher now should be.

Duty to God comes first.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.

Name the important things about the apostles.

With what incident did our last lesson close?

Verses 7, 8

What shows the great fame of Jesus?

Give the location of the different countries and cities named.

Why did the multitudes come?

Verses 9-12

Where did Jesus go?

What arrangement did he make to keep the crowd from pressing upon him?

What is said of the unclean spirits?

How did they know Jesus?

Why did they fear Jesus?

What does James say about the demons?

Verses 13-15

From the seashore where did Jesus go?

Whom did he take with him?

What business did he attend to?

Why were the multitudes left behind?

Why did Jesus want the apostles to be with him continually?

What power was to be given to the apostles?

Why was this power given to them?

How can we make religion attractive?

Verses 16-19

Name the apostles.

Verses 31-35

Why did the friends of Jesus become so excited about him?

What is said of his mother and brethren?

What did Jesus say?

Give the lesson you learn from the incident.

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IX—February 27, 1938

MEASURING A MAN'S WORTH

Mark 5: 1-17

1 And they came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes.

2 And when he was come out of the boat, straightway there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

3 Who had his dwelling in the tombs: and no man could any more bind him, no, not with a chain;

4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been rent asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: and no man had strength to tame him.

5 And always, night and day, in the tombs and in the mountains, he was crying out, and cutting himself with stones.

6 And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshipped him;

7 And crying out with a loud voice, he saith, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God? I adjure thee by God, torment me not.

8 For he said unto him, Come forth, thou unclean spirit, out of the man.

9 And he asked him, What is thy name? And he saith unto him, My name is Legion; for we are many.

10 And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.

11 Now there was there on the mountain side a great herd of swine feeding.

12 And they besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

13 And he gave them leave. And the unclean spirits came out, and entered into the swine: and the herd rushed down the steep into the sea, in number about two thousand; and they were drowned in the sea.

14 And they that fed them fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they came to see what it was that had come to pass.

15 And they came to Jesus, and behold him that was possessed with demons sitting, clothed and in his right mind, even him that had the legion: and they were afraid.

16 And they that saw it declared unto them how it befell him that was possessed with demons, and concerning the swine.

17 And they began to beseech him to depart from their borders.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"How much then is a man of more value than a sheep?"* (Matt. 12: 12.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 8.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

February 21.	M.	One Man Worth Saving (Mark 5: 1-17)
February 22.	T.	A Woman Worth Saving (John 8: 1-11)
February 23.	W.	God's Estimate of Man's Worth (John 3: 14-17)
February 24.	T.	Paul Champions Womanhood (Acts 16: 16-23)
February 25.	F.	Jesus Champions Childhood (Matt. 18: 1-6)
February 26.	S.	Christ Died for Sinners (Rom. 5: 1-11)
February 27.	S.	A Little Lower Than God (Psalm 8: 1-9)

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 8: 28-34; Luke 8: 26-37.

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 29, or in the early part of the year 30.

Place.—The country of the Gerasenes. Matthew calls it the country of the Gadarenes. Gadara was a well-known city of that region. Perhaps this accounts for Matthew's referring to the place as the country of the Gadarenes, but the incident occurred near Gerasa.

It is certain that the incidents occurred near the Sea of Galilee, and on the east side of that sea.

Persons.—Jesus, his disciples, a demoniac, and the Gerasenes. The disciples are not mentioned in the lesson; but they were present, for they had come over with Jesus in boats.

Lesson Links.—In Mark 4: 1-34 we have a condensed report of a discourse in which Jesus set forth some of the phases, or characteristics, of his kingdom in a series of parables. A fuller report is made of this discourse in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew. Luke also gives a report in the eighth chapter. It was a peculiar sermon, in that it was made up entirely of parables. His enemies were becoming more intense in their hatred toward him, and had he at that time taught the public in plain language about his kingdom, his enemies would have become still more enraged, and would have perverted anything he might have said; but parables were to them little more than beautiful little stories. There was nothing in them that they knew how to make capital of. Their hearts had waxed too gross—too materialistic—to accept any plain teaching about a spiritual kingdom. For that reason, as he himself explained, he spoke to them in parables. Even now some men are so materialistic that they can conceive of no kingdom except a kingdom after the fashion of world kingdoms. "And on that day, when even was come, he saith unto them, Let us go over unto the other side." Even his disciples might have wondered why he should leave such a multitude of his own race and religion to go over into a country of heathens. But if they voiced any protest, it is not recorded. "And leaving the multitude, they take him with them, even as he was, in the boat." He had been teaching the people from the boat, and they left without any further preparations. Quite a number of his disciples accompanied them, for other boats were used. The twelve apostles were not the only disciples that accompanied Jesus in his journeys. (See Acts 1: 21, 22.) As they crossed the sea a great storm of wind arose, and the waves began to fill the boat, while Jesus himself calmly slept. In distress the disciples awoke him, and said, "Teacher, carest thou not that we perish?" According to Matthew they also said, "Save, Lord; we perish." Jesus arose, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still." Here then was a double miracle—stopping the winds and calming the waves. That made it the more impressive; for the winds might cease rather suddenly any way; but a raging sea does not suddenly become calm. And Jesus rebuked the disciples for their lack of faith. It seems that they thought Jesus was indifferent to their welfare, for their language shows that they believed he could save them if he would. "And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" Had they then known Jesus as they later came to know him, they would not have been lacking in faith, nor feared, nor asked, "Who then is this?"

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

A Man Possessed of Demons (Verses 1-7)

The Country of the Gerasenes.—"And they came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes." This was on the east side of the Sea of Galilee, "over against Galilee." It was a heathen

country. The country of the Gerasenes was the country surrounding the village of Gerasa, or Gergasa. It was included in the territory known as Decapolis. It seems that not many, if any, Jews lived in that section of the country.

The Demoniac.—Immediately after coming out of the boat, "there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit." One of the strangest of all maladies was this demon possession. No effort to explain away the reality of these demons can be made to harmonize with the plain statements of the New Testament. At least some of those who were possessed of demons had superhuman knowledge, and the man of our lesson had more than human strength. But Matthew mentions two in this connection. Perhaps only one of them was in such desperate condition. He had left home, and had his dwelling in the tombs, doubtless the caves of the mountain where the natives buried their dead. No one could tame him. Being often bound, he had broken the fetters. Being possessed of a legion of demons, he was a raving maniac, a wild man, possessed of superhuman strength, a terror to all; "exceeding fierce, so that no man could pass that way." Stripped of all clothing, "night and day, in the tombs and in the mountains, he was crying out, and cutting himself with stones." The most pitiable and desperate of all the demon possessed. Though he was wild and raving, a terror to all, yet when he saw the Son of God, he fell down before him and worshiped him. Like others possessed of demons, he knew Jesus to be the Son of God, and cried out, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God? I adjure thee by God, torment me not." Matthew represents him as saying, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" It appears that these evil spirits recognized that torment was in the future for them, and they feared that they might be immediately sent to their doom.

The Demon Cast Out (Verses 8-13)

How or why evil spirits entered into people is not known, nor why some people had more than one evil spirit. Mary Magdalene must have been more than ordinarily wicked, and the man of our lesson must have been a terror in wickedness; but no word of reproach was lodged against the character of either one, nor against any of the others possessed of demons. But the demons themselves were doomed spirits—this they recognized. Luke reports these unclean spirits as begging Jesus not to command them to enter into the abyss. They therefore recognized the right and the power of Jesus to send them where he pleased. They did not yet want to be robbed of their freedom and sent to their final doom.

The Demons Enter Swine.—"Now there was there on the mountain side a great herd of swine feeding," "in number about two thousand." The evil spirits, not wanting to be sent out of the country, begged Jesus that they be sent into the swine. When Jesus gave them leave to enter the swine, they came out of the man, and entered into the swine. Forthwith the swine became as crazy as the man had been. He had been wandering through the mountains night and day, crying out and cutting himself with stones; now, as soon as the unclean spirits entered the swine, they rushed down the mountain into the sea, and were drowned. The whole thing goes beyond

our understanding. Why should two thousand hogs be destroyed? It has been pointed out that the Jews were forbidden to keep swine, for they were forbidden to eat the flesh of swine. It may have been that these hogs were owned by a renegade Jew in violation of the law—a sort of “bootlegger” in swine flesh. Such property is usually destroyed by the proper authorities. Trench has suggested that “if this granting of the evil spirit’s request helped in any way the cure of the man, this would have been motive enough. Or, still more probably, it may have been necessary for the permanent healing of the man that he should have an outward evidence and testimony that the hellish powers which held him in bondage had quitted their hold.” Besides, the benefit to the whole country, to say nothing of the man’s benefit, more than outweighed the loss of the swine, for the man had become so dangerous that no man could pass that way. Neither should we think of that drove of scrubs as being at all comparable to the fine porkers that have been developed within the memory of some men now living.

The Man Sane and Clothed (Verses 14, 15)

“And they that fed them fled, and told it in the city, and in the country.” They hastened to report the matter—perhaps also driven by fear of what might happen to them if they remained in the presence of the one who had such powers. The people gathered to see what had come to pass. “And they come to Jesus, and behold him that was possessed with demons sitting, clothed and in his right mind.” While the man was crazy, he was a nudist; now that he was in his right mind he appropriately put on clothing. No civilized person in his right mind wants to go naked. Sanity and civilization demand clothing.

The People Ask Jesus to Leave (Verses 16, 17)

Gerasa was rather an isolated place. Outside affairs would not be much in the minds of the people. Isolated, with no newspapers, no telephones, no radios, and no means of rapid transportation, they would have little to engage their attention excepting local happenings. Hence, when a great thing occurred in their vicinity, there would be much excitement and no end of talk. No such powers had ever before been manifested in their section of country, and they were afraid. Afraid of what? Perhaps they would not have been able to express their fear in words that would make sense. No one else had brought, or could bring, such a blessing to them, and yet they were afraid. People are afraid of unusual powers and forces which they do not understand. “And they began to beseech him to depart from their borders.” To us it seems that they would have begged him to remain longer. He had turned a dangerous man into a useful citizen. Jesus was the greatest person that had ever been in their midst, and in so benefiting the demoniac had conferred an immeasurable blessing on the whole country. Now they want him to go from them. But were they worse or more stupid than others? The people of Nazareth sought to kill him. The Pharisees and Herodians plotted to destroy him, and the authorities in Jerusalem murdered him. Many people today will not have him as their

Savior and king. The printed text of our lesson does not give the full account of the incident. The student should read verses 18-20. As Jesus was entering the boat to return to Galilee, the man out of whom the evil spirits had been cast begged Jesus to be allowed to accompany him. His attitude toward Jesus differed entirely from the attitude of the rest of the people of that section. He appreciated what had been done for him. But Jesus did not need him in his company, and so sent him back to tell his friends how great things the Lord had done for him, and how the Lord had had mercy upon him. He could thus prepare the people so that Jesus would receive a welcome when he came again. "And he went his way, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men marvelled." And his preaching in Decapolis did create a favorable impression; for the people of that section gave Jesus a fine reception on his next visit, as may be seen by reading Mark 7: 31-37.

SOME REFLECTIONS

A storm is a fearful thing. That is especially true, if a person is in a small boat out on the sea, as was the case with the disciples as they crossed to the country of the Gerasenes. Even though Jesus was with them, they were greatly afraid, for their faith was weak.

There are so many points at which a person's faith may be weak. He might believe in the power of God, but not in his goodness and mercy. This seems to have been the reason for the fear on the part of the Gerasenes. A person may believe that God is, and yet not believe he is a rewarder of those who seek him. Some Christians believe in God as a Creator, but seem to have little faith in him as a Father. It is well to meditate on these things.

In calming the winds and the waves Jesus showed his power over the forces of nature, just as in curing diseases he had showed his power over all human ailments. Now, in casting a legion of unclean spirits out of an unfortunate man, he shows his power over all the forces of evil. Such miracles also showed his benevolence, his good purposes toward man. But the Gerasenes did not understand him. They knew his power, but not his goodness. Because they did not understand, they were afraid, and did not want him to remain longer in their midst. If people understood Jesus even now, they would love him and serve him. Because the Gerasenes did not understand, they sent from them the greatest benefactor that had come, or could come, their way.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The parable of the sower.
The storm at sea.
The demons cast out.
Sending Christ away.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings
Give time, place, and persons.

Give nature of the speech recorded in chapter 4.

Where did Jesus propose that they go?

Give evidence that other disciples

besides the twelve apostles accompanied Jesus in his journeys. Tell about the storm.

Verses 1-7

Into what country did they go? Where is that country? State the condition of the man who met Jesus. What did this man say to Jesus?

Verses 8-13

Is there any evidence that demoniacs were formerly bad? What did the evil spirits realize? What plea did the evil spirits in this man make? What happened?

Verses 14, 15

How did the people first learn of the miracle?

What evidence did the people find that the man was sane?

What bearing does this have on nudism?

Verses 16, 17

What effect did the miracle have on the people?

What did they ask Jesus to do?

Why did they not want him in their midst?

Who now act much as these people did?

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson X—March 6, 1938

SERVING WITH WHAT WE HAVE

Mark 6: 1-13

1 And he went out from thence; and he cometh into his own country; and his disciples follow him.

2 And when the sabbath was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, Whence hath this man these things? and, What is the wisdom that is given unto this man, and what mean such mighty works wrought by his hands?

3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended in him.

4 And Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

5 And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.

6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages teaching.

7 And he calleth unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and he gave them authority over the unclean spirits;

8 And he charged them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no bread, no wallet, no money in their purse;

9 But to go shod with sandals; and, said he, put not on two coats.

10 And he said unto them, Wheresoever ye enter into a house, there abide till ye depart thence.

11 And whatsoever place shall not receive you, and they hear you not, as ye go forth thence, shake off the dust that is under your feet for a testimony unto them.

12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

13 And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“What I have, that give I thee.” (Acts 3: 6.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 12: 3-8.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

February 28.	M.	Serving with Power (Mark 6: 1-6)
March 1.	T.	Serving without Money (Mark 6: 7-13)
March 2.	W.	“There Is a Lad Here” (John 6: 5-14)
March 3.	T.	“What Is That in Thy Hand?” (Ex. 4: 1-5)
March 4.	F.	Serving with Our Talents (Matt. 25: 14-30)
March 5.	S.	A Humble Servant Rewarded (1 Kings 3: 5-14)
March 6.	S.	Acceptable Service (Rom. 12: 3-8)

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 10: 1-15; 13: 54-58; Luke 9: 1-6.

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably early in the year A.D. 30. If, as is generally understood, A.D. 27 was the year in which Jesus was baptized, then A.D. 28 must have been the year in which he attended his first Passover after his baptism. And if, as appears probable, the feast of John 5: 1 was the Passover, it was the Passover of A.D. 29. Another Passover came soon after the events of our present lesson. (Compare Mark 6: 35-44 and John 6: 1-14.) It would seem, therefore, that the incidents of this lesson occurred in the early part of A.D. 30.

Places.—Nazareth and other parts of Galilee. Nazareth is not mentioned in the Old Testament. Its fame is due to the fact that it was the home of Jesus during the most of his earth life.

Persons.—Jesus, the people of Nazareth, and the twelve apostles.

Lesson Links.—When Jesus came back across the Sea of Galilee from the country of the Gerasenes, a great multitude gathered about him. Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, hastened to Jesus from the bedside of a dying daughter, his only daughter, earnestly begging Jesus to come and lay his hands on her, "that she may be made whole, and live." As Jesus went with Jairus, a woman with a long-standing affliction pressed through the multitude that thronged Jesus, and touched his garment, and was immediately healed. Her faith was strong enough to lead her to do what she could, and she was healed because of such faith. Some one brought word that the ruler's daughter was already dead; but Jesus said to Jairus, "Fear not, only believe." At that moment, that was all that Jairus could do. His faith had prompted him to come to Jesus and beg for help. Having done all he could do, the matter was then wholly in the hands of the Lord. When Jesus reached the home of Jairus, he took with him the father and the mother, also Peter, James, and John, and entered into the room where the dead child lay. He took her by the hand, and said, "Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise." Immediately she rose up, and walked.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Jesus Misunderstood at Nazareth (Verses 1-3)

Though Jesus had made his home at Capernaum since the people of Nazareth tried to kill him, Nazareth was still referred to as his own country or city. No one ever referred to him as Jesus of Capernaum, but always as Jesus of Nazareth. By that designation he was known in Jericho (Luke 18: 37), and in Jerusalem at the time of his triumphal entry (Matt. 21: 11), at his arrest (John 18: 5, 7), at his trial (Matt. 26: 71), and at his crucifixion (John 19: 19). In their preaching the apostles frequently so referred to him, and he identified himself to Saul as Jesus of Nazareth. In our lesson we find him back at Nazareth—this time for a short visit. His disciples were with him. Some have assumed, without sufficient evidence, that this visit is the same as the one mentioned in Luke 4: 15-30. At the visit mentioned by Luke the people became so angry that they sought to kill him; whereas, at this visit, the people were puzzled, or astonished at him, rather than angry with him. Other reasons might be given as to why the visits were not the same.

Whence Such Power?—"Whence hath this man these things? and, What is the wisdom that is given unto this man, and what mean such mighty works wrought by his hands?" Such were the questions that his former neighbors and associates passed among themselves when Jesus taught on the Sabbath in their synagogue. It is not likely that they began this talk till after the services were over. But let us not be too hard on these Nazarenes till, at least, we shall have advanced beyond them. They were human, as we are, and had about the same bias we have. Jesus had grown up in their midst, had followed an ordinary trade, had attended their synagogue, and had never gone off anywhere to school. So far as they could see, he had no more education than they had. He belonged to the poorer class, the common people, and had worked in their midst as a carpenter. "His old shop stands over there"; "he made that ox yoke of mine"; "he made our table"; "he made my plow." Such thoughts would run through their minds, even if they did not speak them out. To them he was a puzzle, a riddle, a mystery—all in one, and they were bewildered—they could not understand. His education did not account for his powers. What then? His family, some hereditary powers? Not that, they knew his people, just ordinary folks. They knew them all.

His Mother, Brothers, Sisters.—"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?" It is here, as well as elsewhere, plainly stated that Jesus had brothers and sisters. One of the plain and necessary rules of interpretation is, that we must take language in its plain and ordinary meaning, unless the circumstances or the connections forbid. Nothing militates against the idea that Mary had other children than Jesus. In fact, the natural conclusion would be that she did have other children. Therefore, when the Bible plainly says that Jesus had brothers and sisters, it should be accepted as a fact. Whether or not Jesus had brothers and sisters would be of no special interest to us were it not that certain religionists worship her as the Virgin Mary, as if a virgin were so much holier than a natural mother. Their claim for the perpetual virginity of Mary is as unscriptural as it is unnatural, as idolatrous as it is unreasonable. There is incontrovertible proof to the contrary. We know not how many sisters Jesus had, but the language the people used shows that the sisters were still living in Nazareth. The people knew his family. None of them were considered great—where did Jesus get his greatness? So "they were offended in him"—literally, "they were caused to stumble." They tried to account for him as a man, as the natural son of poor parents, but from that angle they could not account for him at all. Many giant intellects of later years have tried to do the same thing, and have been confronted with the same unanswerable questions that baffled the people of Nazareth. They can be answered only on the grounds that he is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?" Yes, that; but infinitely more—Immanuel, God with us.

A Prophet Not Honored at Home (Verses 4-6)

"And Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house."

Jesus here states a deplorable truth. It should not have been true; but it was, and still is, true. The people of Nazareth should have recognized Jesus for what he was, and especially should his own family have done so. For even his brethren did not believe on him. (John 7: 5.) It appears that they did later come to believe in him. But in not believing in Jesus the people of Nazareth were much like all other people. It is a wise man that can recognize true greatness in the people close to him. Even now preachers from a distance are greater in the minds of most people than those at home. Distance diminishes the visibility of physical objects, but it magnifies character and personalities. Because of this senseless weakness in humanity, people cheat themselves out of much help that might be given them by the good people at home. The experience of Jesus at Nazareth is the experience in some degree of every other good man.

Unbelief Hindered.—"And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them." By their unbelief they cheated themselves and the suffering members of their families. They did not have enough faith to call on him to cure the sick, with the exception of a few. His main purpose in performing miracles of healing was to prove that God was with him, and to gain a favorable hearing. As they still derided and rejected him after he had healed a few sick people, what was the use of performing more miracles? So far as his main work was concerned, it would be a waste of time and energy to cure more people.

Marveled.—"And he marvelled because of their unbelief." Twice it is said that Jesus marvelled. In the other instance Jesus marvelled at the faith of the centurion. (Matt. 8: 10, Luke 7: 9.) There he marvelled at the greatness of faith; here he marvelled at the greatness of unbelief. Having sought to benefit his old neighbors and his own people, and they rejected him, he left them and went through the villages of Galilee teaching.

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve (Verse 7)

In lesson eight we had the selection of twelve men to be apostles. This selection would make them realize that Jesus had in view a special work for them, and would help to cultivate in them a feeling of responsibility. The personal mission of Jesus was fast drawing toward its end, and much teaching yet needed to be done. Jesus had been preparing his apostles, and the time had come for them to pass on to others some of the things they had learned. In doing this needed but limited work, they would gain training and experience for their world-wide mission on which they were later to be sent. They were sent out by "two and two." To them it was a new work. Two could do with more encouragement and assurance than if each went alone. In various ways they could help each other. Jesus assured them that they would have power over unclean spirits. This power was not inherent in them; neither did they have that power simply because they were disciples. It was a special power delegated to them, and not to all disciples.

Jesus Gives Them Special Instructions (Verses 8-11)

"And he charged them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only." They were not to be out any expense in fitting themselves up for the journey. They would be fed wherever they were, for the Jews were trained under the law to care for any who came their way. They would be given lodging. The wallet was a leather bag, usually suspended to a staff on the shoulder. As they were to carry no bread or other articles, they would need no wallet. The marginal reading gives "girdle" as the meaning of the word here translated "purse." This the translators did to accommodate the word to our use, for the ancients carried their money in the folds of their girdle. That was their "purse." They were to go shod with sandals—soles strapped to their feet. And they were to take only one coat. No unnecessary thing was carried.

How They Were to Behave.—"Wheresoever ye enter into a house, there abide till ye depart thence." But, according to Matthew, when they entered into a city they were first to enquire for worthy people with whom to lodge. And they were to make that home their lodging place so long as they remained in that city. In a strange town or city, with no one to advise him, a preacher might take lodging with people whose character and reputation were such as to ruin his prospects of accomplishing anything. Jesus required that they avoid such a possibility. For reasons too numerous to mention here, it is better now for a preacher to make one place his home during a series of meetings. "And whatsoever place shall not receive you, . . . as ye go forth thence, shake off the dust that is under your feet for a testimony unto them." It is said that a Pharisee, on reaching the borders of Judea from a journey into a Gentile country, stamped the dust off his feet. This act required of the disciples on this mission would say plainly, "We disclaim any connection with these people, and want nothing of this city to cling to us." On leaving Antioch in Pisidia Paul and Barnabas "shook off the dust of their feet against them." (Acts 13: 15.)

They Preached and Worked Miracles (Verses 12, 13)

"And they went out, and preached that men should repent." In Matthew's report Jesus commanded them to preach "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." To get ready for that kingdom the people had to repent. A person may have some faith in God, as did all the Jews to whom this preaching was done, and still continue in sin as the most of them did; but repentance is different—it is action. It is putting sin out of our thoughts, purposes, and deeds. It is faith coming alive and working toward a definite goal. Repentance is such a change of mind as to result in a reformation of life.

They Performed Miracles.—They cast out demons, and healed many that were sick. It must have filled these apostles with amazement and joy that they could bring such joy to suffering humanity. But this was only a foretaste of the greater joy that they would later experience in carrying the gospel of salvation to a lost and ruined world.

This Commission Limited.—It was limited as to time, for it was later superseded by the Great Commission. It was also limited as

to territory. Matthew has this additional item: "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and charged them, saying, Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." It was also limited as to what they preached—they could not preach a full gospel.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Jesus did not send his apostles out to do public preaching till they had first had a period of teaching and training. There is evidence that some of them did personal work from the beginning. In doing personal work a disciple can select the ones he approaches; not so in doing public work.

In fulfilling this commission they would go to none but religious people—to none save those who professed to believe in God. They would find free lodging in every place they visited. Their journey would not last long enough for them to need new clothing. Hence, they would need no money.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The making of apostles.
Making preachers.
The kingdom at hand.
How preachers should behave.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
Where was Jesus in our last lesson?
Relate the incidents about Jairus and daughter.
Tell about the woman who was healed.
How did Jairus and the woman show their faith?

Verses 1-3

Locate Nazareth on the map.
Where was Jesus making his home at this time?
What did people continue to call him?
What occurred at a former visit to Nazareth?
How were the people affected by this visit?
Why did his wisdom and works so puzzle them?
In what way are we much like them?
What evidence that Jesus had brothers and sisters in the flesh?
How can we account for the works and wisdom of Jesus?

Verses 4-6

What did Jesus say about the situation?
Why is it true?
What lesson is it to us?
Why are people not more practical?
Why could he not do many mighty works?
What was the main object of his miracles?

Verses 7

Name the twelve apostles.
Why did he now send them out?
Why did he not send them earlier?
Why send two together?
What power was given them?

Verses 8-11

Repeat the special instructions.
Why take along no extra supplies?
How were they to conduct themselves?
If a city did not receive them, what then?

Verses 12, 13

What did they preach?
Who had formerly preached the same?
What is repentance?
What miracles did they perform?
Where were they not to go?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XI—March 13, 1938

FEEDING THE HUNGRY

Mark 6: 30-44

30 And the apostles gather themselves together unto Jesus; and they told him all things, whatsoever they had done, and whatsoever they had taught.
 31 And he saith unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while. For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

32 And they went away in the boat to a desert place apart.

33 And the people saw them going, and many knew them, and they ran together there on foot from all the cities, and outwent them.

34 And he came forth and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

35 And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, The place is desert, and the day is now far spent;

36 Send them away, that they may go into the country and villages round about, and buy themselves somewhat to eat.

37 But he answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred shillings' worth of bread, and give them to eat?

38 And he saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes.

39 And he commanded them that all should sit down by companies upon the green grass.

40 And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties.

41 And he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake the loaves; and he gave to the disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all.

42 And they all ate, and were filled.

43 And they took up broken pieces, twelve basketfuls, and also of the fishes.

44 And they that ate the loaves were five thousand men.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Give ye them to eat." (Mark 6: 37.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 35: 1, 2, 5-10.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

March 7.	M.	Feeding the Hungry (Mark 6: 30-44)
March 8.	T.	God Wants the Hungry Fed (Isa. 58: 1-9)
March 9.	W.	The Hungry Fed and Taught (John 21: 1-15)
March 10.	T.	Feeding the Enemy (Rom. 12: 10-21)
March 11.	F.	Bread for the Hungry Soul (John 6: 41-51)
March 12.	S.	No More Hunger (Rev. 7: 9-17)
March 13.	S.	Life Abounding (Isa. 35: 1, 2, 5-10)

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 14: 13-21; Luke 9: 10-17; John 6: 1-14.

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 30. It was but a short time before the Passover Feast.

Place.—A desert place on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee. It was near Bethsaida.

Persons.—Jesus, the disciples, and the multitudes.

Lesson Links.—In our last lesson Jesus was sending out the apostles on a preaching tour among the Jews. Matthew adds this statement: "And it came to pass when Jesus had finished commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and preach in their cities." Just before the events of this lesson Herod had killed John the Baptist. The murder of John had greatly stirred the

people; but when Herod heard of the mighty works of Jesus he concluded that John had risen from the dead, "and therefore do these powers work in him." Herod's conscience was hurting him, for he knew John was a righteous man, and would not have killed him had it not been for the foolish notion that he must stick to a foolish oath which he had rashly made. In this he showed the weakness of his character. Men who thoughtlessly make foolish promises should have enough manhood about them not to carry them out. For an account of the imprisonment and murder of John the Baptist read Matt. 14: 1-12; Mark 6: 14-19; Luke 9: 7-9. The miracle which we are now to study is the one miracle that is recorded by the four writers.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Apostles Report to Jesus (Verse 30)

The apostles soon returned from their preaching tour. As it appears that all returned about the same time, it seems that Jesus had appointed a time for their return. When they returned "the apostles gather themselves together unto Jesus; and they told him all things, whatsoever they had done, and whatsoever they had taught." As Jesus had sent them to do a certain work, it was their duty to report to him how well they had carried out his orders. That is recognized as a necessary procedure in all human transactions, whether it be in business, war, or religion. When the church at Antioch sent Barnabas and Saul on a preaching tour, they reported back to the church that sent them. (Acts 13: 1-4; 14: 27.) Those who are interested in a work want to know how successfully the work is done.

Jesus and the Apostles Seek Rest (Verses 31, 32)

"And he saith unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while. For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat." The disciples had been on a strenuous and exhausting campaign, and needed rest. It is good to rest a while when we need rest—good for the body, mind, and soul; but when rest becomes idleness, it is hurtful physically, mentally, and morally. They had no chance to rest where people were crowding them so that they had not even leisure to eat. From John 6: 4 we learn that the Feast of the Passover was at hand. Great crowds would be passing through Capernaum on their way to the feast. Many of these had been in the multitudes that had previously come to see Jesus, and to be healed of their sicknesses; many, of course, had seen his miracles and heard his teaching in the cities where he had gone. Perhaps many had only heard of him. All who, for any reason, felt friendly toward Jesus, would want to see him as they passed through on their way to the Feast of the Passover. As the text puts it, "many coming and going." To be continually beset by a constant stream of comers and goers, demanding a few minutes of one's time as they passed through, was, in itself, a drain on the strength of Jesus and his disciples that they would not care to stand very long. Hence, Jesus invited his disciples to go with him to a desert place away from the regular course of travel. From Matthew we learn that the excitement caused by the beheading

of John the Baptist had some influence on Jesus in his deciding to withdraw for a time from the multitudes.

Jesus Has Compassion on the Gathering Multitude (Verses 33, 34)

It will be noticed that Jesus and his disciples went to this desert place in a boat. A desert place was therefore not a waterless place, but a deserted place—an uninhabited place. It appears that they made slow progress in their boat. The wind must not have been in their favor. Anyway, the people who saw them going went on foot around the upper end of the Sea of Galilee, and reached the point of landing first. They would not give Jesus and his disciples much opportunity to rest. Of course, they had some rest from the pressure of the crowds while they were in the boat. John tells us why the multitude followed Jesus: "And a great multitude followed him, because they beheld the signs which he did on them that were sick." They were more interested in being cured of physical ailments than they were in his teaching. Salvation from disease counts more with most people than salvation from sin. It appears also from what John says that the greater part of the multitude did not arrive till after Jesus and his disciples had landed and had gone up into a mountain.

Jesus Had Compassion on Them.—"Jesus therefore lifting up his eyes, and seeing that a great multitude cometh unto him, saith unto Philip, Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat?" (John 6: 5.) Mark says, "And he came forth and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things." Jesus was not indifferent to humanity's needs. He had compassion on the sick and the grief-stricken; and he had compassion on these people who were trying to serve God under the leadership of men who were selfish, and who had by their traditions made void the commandments of God, and who had bound burdens upon men grievous to be borne. The leaders were like whited sepulchers, which outwardly appear beautiful to men, but are full of corruption and dead men's bones. They were interested in themselves and their traditions, and not in the spiritual welfare of the people. Truly, the people "were as sheep not having a shepherd." People thus used and abused excited the compassion of Jesus. So full of compassion was he that he wept over Jerusalem because of the sins of the people and because of the calamities that were to come upon them.

Jesus Feeds the Multitude (Verses 35-44)

As the day began to draw toward the close, the disciples began to think about the question of food for the multitude. In their haste and excitement the people had rushed out to this place without making any preparation for something to eat. The disciples knew of no way for such a multitude to have food, unless they scattered out and bought it; so they asked Jesus to "send them away, that they may go into the country and villages round about, and buy themselves somewhat to eat." They wanted something to be done about the matter before darkness came on.

The Conversation About Food.—This is the one miracle that all the writers—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—record. Each writer tells only a part of what was said and done. Putting together what all of them say, we can imagine that the conversation ran about as follows: Jesus said to Philip, "Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat?" Philip answered, "Two hundred shillings' worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little." Jesus said, "Give ye them to eat." The other disciples said, "Shall we go and buy two hundred shillings' worth of bread, and give them to eat?" Then said Jesus, "How many loaves have ye? Go and see." After making a search, Andrew reported, "There is a lad here, who hath five barley loaves, and two fishes: but what are these among so many?" That Philip and then the others mentioned two hundred shillings indicates that that was the amount Jesus and his disciples had on hand. Of course Jesus knew all the while how the multitude would be fed, but wanted to prove his disciples and to bring matters to such a point that the miracle would be manifest to all. All must know of the meager supply, so that they would later know what a great miracle had been wrought in feeding them. It was good for the disciples to do what they could in meeting the emergency. Jesus would have us to use what we have, whether it be much or little. If a person can do much, he should do much; if he can do only a little, let him do that.

The Orderly Arrangement.—"And he commanded them that all should sit down by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties." In feeding so many some sort of system and order was necessary. An untrained multitude like that could not be depended upon to arrange themselves in an orderly way. Somebody had to superintend the seating of that crowd. From Luke we learn that Jesus had the apostles to arrange the people in groups, so as to make it convenient for the apostles to distribute the food to them. It is said that "the Jewish dining room was arranged like the Roman: three tables forming three sides of a square, and with divans or couches following the outside line of the tables." To arrange this crowd in squares with one side of the square open, or to arrange them in a V-shape, made it so that the disciples could easily distribute the food to them; and also this orderly arrangement made it easy to count the number present. The green grass made a very pleasant carpet on which to recline or sit.

Blessed—Gave Thanks.—"And he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake the loaves; and he gave to the disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all." This does not mean that he blessed the bread and the fishes, but that he praised, or blessed God; or, as John tells us, he gave thanks. Sometimes to bless and to give thanks are used interchangeably. In reporting the institution of the Lord's Supper, Matthew says, "Jesus took bread, and blessed." "It," as the object of blessed, is not in the original, nor is it in the American Standard Version. Luke says, "And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave to them." Paul uses the word thanks. Hence, in connection with eating, to bless and to give thanks are the same. The old-timer who was wont to say to the guest at the table, "Say the blessing," was not departing from

scriptural example. Every one should give thanks at the table for the food. Evidently the supply increased as Jesus broke the loaves and divided the fishes.

Nothing Wasted.—"And they all ate, and were filled. And they took up broken pieces, twelve basketfuls, and also of the fishes." This shows that there were twelve basketfuls of the broken pieces of the bread, for the fishes are mentioned as an additional item. And five thousand men had been fed all they wanted, and Matthew adds, "besides women and children." John reports Jesus as saying, "Gather up the broken pieces which remain over, that nothing be lost." There is a lesson on economy in this. No useful thing should be wasted; to waste useful things is a sin. Some people waste more than they use. Jesus would not have anything thrown away that could be used. But this question may arise: If he wanted nothing lost, why did he increase the amount so far above what they could eat? Think a little, and you will see. Had everything been eaten to the last scrap, even though everyone had been filled, they might have wondered how every one got enough out of so little; but when all were filled, and then more was taken up than they began with, everyone could readily see that a great miracle had been performed.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Work and rest, properly balanced, are essential to the greatest efficiency and satisfaction. The need of rest is plainly shown in the fact that God required the Jews to rest one day in seven. But to try to rest when no work has been done is mere idleness.

The people had no idea of the nature of Christ's kingdom, and this miracle made them think that Jesus was the one to head the kingdom which they expected. The army would not need to worry about food! John says, "Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about . . . to make him king, withdrew again into the mountains himself alone."

The people had been fired to anger and indignation by the cruel fate of John the Baptist, and were ready to revolt. But it does seem, that, since they expected God to establish a kingdom, they would have been willing for him to work out his own plans, instead of trying to take matters in their own hands. However, they were not different from other people. People are constantly trying to improve on God's plans. It is a weakness that has brought on all the turmoil and strife that has afflicted Christianity from the beginning.

The next day after the miracle, when Jesus had returned to Capernaum, the multitudes "came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus." To them Jesus said, "Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves, and were filled." What an indictment! The real blessings which Jesus had for them they did not want—only the loaves and fishes! They were not materialists in theory, but they were in practice. Only material things interested them—the main thing was something to eat. Jesus followed his rebuke with a sermon on the bread of life. Read the sixth chapter of John.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Work and rest.
The Bible use of the term "desert."
The kingdom of God.
The bread of life.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
What was our last lesson about?
What did Jesus then do?
What crime stirred the people about that time?
Give the circumstances of that crime.
Should a foolish promise be carried out or broken?

Verse 30

What event is mentioned in verse 30?
Why report to Jesus?
Discuss the making of reports.

Verses 31, 32

What did Jesus invite the apostles to do?
In Bible usage, what is a desert?
Why did they need to leave Capernaum to rest?
What feast was at hand?

Verses 33, 34

How did they go to the desert place?

Who followed, and how?
Why did these people follow Jesus?
Wherein are people now much like them?
How did Jesus feel toward the people, and why?
What was wrong with the Jewish leaders?

Verses 35-44

Toward evening, what interested the disciples?
What did they ask Jesus to do?
Give the probable way the conversation ran.
What food supply was found?
Describe how the people were arranged.
What then did Jesus do?
What does blessed mean when used in connection with eating?
What did Jesus command after all had eaten?
Discuss wastefulness.
How much was gathered up?
Why should Jesus make so much?
How many were fed?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XII—March 20, 1938

KEEPING THE BODY STRONG

Mark 6: 53-56; Judges 13: 12-14; 1 Cor. 3: 16, 17; Rom. 12: 1, 2

53 And when they had crossed over, they came to the land unto Gennesaret, and moored to the shore.

54 And when they were come out of the boat, straightway the people knew him,

55 And ran round about that whole region, and began to carry about on their beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.

56 And whosoever he entered, into villages, or into cities, or into the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.

12 And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass: what shall be the ordering of the child, and how shall we do unto him?

13 And the angel of Jehovah said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware.

14 She may not eat of anything that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing; all that I commanded her let her observe.

16 Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

17 If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye.

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your

bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service.

2 And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink no wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing." (Judges 13: 4.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 John 2: 12-17.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

March 14.	M.	Christianity and Health (Mark 6: 53-56)
March 15.	T.	Prenatal Influences (Judges 13: 8-14)
March 16.	W.	The Body Belongs to God (1 Cor. 6: 12-20)
March 17.	T.	The Body Sacramental (Rom. 12: 1, 2)
March 18.	F.	Misused Energies (1 Cor. 10: 1-13)
March 19.	S.	Discipline of the Body (1 Cor. 9: 24-27)
March 20.	S.	The Overcoming Life (1 John 2: 12-17)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 30 for Mark 6: 53-56; about 1153 B.C. for the incident in Judges; First Corinthians was written about A.D. 56; Romans was written about A.D. 58.

Places.—Gennesaret, Zorah; The first letter to Corinth was written at Ephesus, the letter to the Romans was written at Corinth.

Persons.—Jesus, the people of Gennesaret, Manoaah and wife, an angel, Paul and the brethren at Corinth and Rome.

Lesson Links.—Our bodies belong to the Lord, and should be used in his service. In speaking against immoral practices Paul concludes by saying, "Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body." (1 Cor. 6: 19, 20.) In 1 Cor. 3: 16, 17, the temple is the church; here our own body is called a temple. As our body is a temple for the Holy Spirit, it should be kept clean—kept free from unclean practices. There is a spirit in man, and it should have the control of the body. If the body controls, it destroys itself in various fleshly indulgences and dissipations. The spirit in man should be the master of the body. Hence, we are commanded not to let sin reign in our mortal body, but to present our body to God as a servant of righteousness. (Rom. 6: 12, 19.) If the thoughts and purposes of the heart are kept pure, the body will not go astray; "for out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings." (Matt. 15: 19.)

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Healing the Sick (Verses 53-56)

After feeding the multitude, Jesus "constrained his disciples to enter into the boat, and to go before him unto the other side to Bethsaida." After he sent the multitude away, he went up into the mountain to pray. Because the winds were contrary, the disciples made slow progress. About the fourth watch of the night Jesus came to them walking on the water. They all saw him, and cried out

with fear, supposing they were seeing a ghost. But Jesus reassured them, saying, "Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid." When he entered the boat, the wind ceased.

Gennesaret.—"And when they had crossed over, they came to the land unto Gennesaret." Gennesaret was a narrow strip of comparatively level country along the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. It was noted for its fertility. Capernaum was one of its many cities.

The People Knew Him.—For a period of nearly two years the people of Galilee had been blessed by the ministrations of Jesus. He had taught them much and had healed many of their ailments. Now, when he landed, word was soon passed along that he was with them again. Like all normal people, these people were interested in any friends or members of their families who were sick. Every one would know of some sick person whom he would like to have healed. And so they "ran round about that whole region, and began to carry about on their beds those that were sick, where they heard he was." Jesus was not remaining at any one place, but was going about through their cities and villages. Everywhere he went they "laid the sick in the marketplaces, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole." Jesus could have cured all these sick people without their touching the border of his garment, or even without their being brought to him; but had all the sick people throughout the land suddenly become well in their homes, the people would have marveled at what had occurred, but would not have known whence the power came. Besides, it was good for the people to do something. It is good for a person to feel that he is contributing something for the welfare of the needy. And when they brought them to Jesus to be cured, they knew whence the power came. And this was the main purpose of the miracles of healing. Jesus performed miracles as signs that he was what he claimed to be and that God approved him. "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." (Acts 2: 22.) "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name." (John 20: 30, 31.)

The Mother and Her Child (Judges 13: 12-14)

If the student does not read the preceding verses of the chapter, the verses of our lesson will not mean so much to him. Because of the sins of the children of Israel, "Jehovah delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years. And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not." An angel of Jehovah appeared to the woman, and promised her that she would have a son, and that this son would be a Nazirite from birth. The Nazirite vow, and what was demanded of one who took that vow, may be learned by reading Num. 6: 1-21. In preparation for the motherhood of this son, certain things were required of Manoah's wife. Manoah's wife reported to him what the angel had said to her; but as yet she

did not know that he was an angel, but referred to him as a man of God. Then Manoah prayed this short, but comprehensive prayer, "Oh, Lord, I pray thee, let the man of God whom thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born."

The Preparation for Motherhood.—When the angel again came, Manoah said to him, "Now let thy words come to pass: what shall be the ordering of the child, and how shall we do unto him?" This is an appropriate prayer for all prospective parents. But few people give proper thought to such matters. The angel now repeated what he had told the woman. "She may not eat of anything that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing." The prospective mother has a great responsibility for her coming child. Nothing should be done that might weaken its body, or impart to it any taste for strong drink. To do well through life the child needs a strong body and a good disposition, or temperament. And the instructions given this prospective mother show that much depended on her.

The Child.—The child which was born to Manoah and his wife was named Samson. He was noted for his physical strength.

The Temple of God (1 Cor. 3: 16, 17)

"Ye are a temple of God." These verses do not refer to the human body, but to the church. Paul had said in verse nine, "Ye are God's husbandry, God's building." Paul had laid the foundation for God's building at Corinth. In preaching Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, he had laid the foundation, the only foundation on which the church, the temple of God, can be built. The converts to Christ were the building materials. That church was a temple of God, and so is every other church that is built on Jesus Christ.

The Indwelling Spirit.—On account of the confusion and strife among the brethren at Corinth, Paul reminds them that the church is God's building; and rebukes them with this question: "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" We may not be able to understand the full meaning of Paul's declaration that the Spirit of God dwelt in them; but we can believe what he says.

The Temple Destroyer Doomed.—Teaching and practices were being carried on at Corinth, that, unless checked, would destroy the church. Somebody was responsible for those conditions, and the doom of such parties was certain. "If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy." Every right thinking member of the church knows that the church is God's house, God's holy temple; and he would no more think of doing anything to destroy it or mar its glory and beauty than he would think of crucifying his Lord if he were here.

Present the Body a Holy, Living, Sacrifice (Rom. 12: 1)

It was through God's mercy that we were redeemed from sin and condemnation by the precious blood of Christ. Every noble instinct in the redeemed man urges him to show his gratitude to God for what God has done for him. Paul beseeches the redeemed soul to

present his body a living sacrifice. Paul did not, as some say, use this expression "in contrast with the dead sacrifice of the Old Testament," for no one then ever offered a dead sacrifice. We are to offer our bodies alive—"alive unto God in Christ Jesus." "Present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead." (Rom. 6: 11, 13.) Let your bodies be alive to the demands God makes of you. "For ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body." (1 Cor. 6: 20.)

Holy.—Holy is kindred in meaning to such words as saint, sanctify, etc. The injunction to present our bodies holy, or sanctified, shows that we have something to do with sanctifying our bodies. Sanctification is not a change of nature, but of relationship. When the tabernacle with its furniture was sanctified, no change was made in the nature of anything about the tabernacle. Everything about the tabernacle had been used only in earthly uses till it was dedicated to the service of God. It was then no longer of the earth; and that is the meaning of the word—not of the earth. So when our bodies which we have used only in a worldly way are dedicated to the services of God, they are sanctified—they are holy. "Even so now present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification." (Rom. 6: 19.) This, of course, requires that we keep our bodies out of sinful practices, for the use we make of our bodies determines whose servants we are. "Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom. 6: 16.) Before we became Christians we presented our "members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity." (Rom. 6: 19.) But God is merciful; and even though we did indulge in sin, he will accept our bodies if we present them to him alive and holy.

Spiritual Service.—To use our bodies in service to God is a spiritual service, for our spirit controls our bodies. In fact, it is only through the use of our bodies that we can serve God at all. There are no carnal ordinances in Christianity; and yet there is not a command of the gospel that we can obey without the use of our body. Whether we sing, or pray, or eat the Lord's Supper, or minister to the sick, or feed the hungry, we use our body. If we are sincere, if our heart, or spirit, is in what we do, our service is a spiritual service. Being baptized is a spiritual service, if we obey from the heart. Of course, if the heart is not in what we do, it is fleshly, and not acceptable to God.

"Be Ye Transformed" (Verse 2)

Jesus the Christ is our example, our pattern. We are to seek to imitate him, insofar as possible. The gospel teaches us how to follow him. Having called us out of the world into his service, he would not have us to be subject to worldly ways and worldly theories. "Be not fashioned according to this world." It requires an effort to keep from falling into the habits and customs of those around us. It requires intelligent discrimination to decide what popular social customs we can comply with and what we must reject. It sometimes takes courage to go contrary to the wishes and customs of our associates. At this point many are led to drink intoxicants and

to engage in other questionable things. The social customs of the times will lead many people into the clutches of the alcohol habit who otherwise would not touch intoxicants. The social drink will lead many to the drunkard's grave. "No harm in a social drink," says one; but "no harm" is the devil's trademark. The world is not the Christian's fashion plate. His life, formerly fashioned according to the world, is to be transformed. Literally, "Be ye transfigured." The word denotes a radical change. We are to put off our former manner of life. But how shall we transform ourselves? By renewing our mind. We live out in our lives what we have in us—in our mind, or heart. We cannot change our lives with the same old stock of ideas. Low, degrading thoughts produce debased conduct. Deeds are thoughts transformed into action. Fill the mind with God's thoughts, and they will transform your life. Herein many Christians fail. A good resolution is worthless unless you renew your mind. The gospel is the dynamic power that transforms character, but it must be in the heart to do so. Study.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Every person should be as useful as possible. He should do what he can to avoid being a burden to others. To that end he needs a sound body; therefore every man, insofar as he can, should keep his body strong and healthy.

Strong drink ruins many people both mentally and physically. Many are in hospitals and asylums as a result of intoxicating liquors. No one has a right to make himself a burden and a grief to others. To do so, when it could be avoided, is criminal.

The drunken driver is a possible murderer. If he kills no one, he is likely to cripple and maim himself and others for life. The drunken driver is a criminal.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

What Christianity has done for the suffering and needy.

The Nazirite vow.

The church the temple of God.

Giving our bodies a living sacrifice.

Transforming our lives.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
What does Paul say about the body as a temple?
What does Paul say about letting sin reign?
Where does sin originate?

Verses 53-56

Tell about the trip across the Sea of Galilee.
Where is Gennesaret?
When Jesus landed, what did the people do?

Why did not Jesus heal the sick without their being brought to him?

Judges 13: 12-14

To whom were the Israelites in subjection, and why?
To whom did an angel appear?
What did the angel announce?
Give Manoah's prayer.
What was required of the prospective mother?
What were the requirements of the Nazirite vow?

1 Cor. 3: 16, 17

What did Paul call the temple of God?

What is the foundation of this temple?
Who dwells in this temple?
What is said of those who destroy the temple?

Rom. 12: 1

Repeat this verse.
In what sense are our bodies to be a living sacrifice?
What is the meaning of holy?
What does the use we make of our bodies determine?

Why is this a spiritual service?
Show that we can obey God only through the use of our bodies.

Verse 2

What is not to be our pattern?
What dangers come from our surroundings?
What social dangers now beset the Christian?
By what means are we transformed?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XIII—March 27, 1938

CORRECTING WRONG IDEAS OF RELIGION

Mark 7: 1-13

1 And there are gathered together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, who had come from Jerusalem.

2 And had seen that some of his disciples ate their bread with defiled, that is, unwashed, hands.

3 (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands diligently, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders;

4 And when they come from the marketplace, except they bathe themselves, they eat not; and many other things there are, which they have received to hold, washings of cups, and pots, and brassen vessels.)

5 And the Pharisees and the scribes ask him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with defiled hands?

6 And he said unto them, Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,

This people honoreth me with their lips,
But their heart is far from me.

7 But in vain do they worship me,

Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.

8 Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men.

9 And he said unto them, Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition.

10 For Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother; and, He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death:

11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or his mother, That where-with thou mightest have been profited by me is Corban, that is to say, Given to God;

12 Ye no longer suffer him to do aught for his father or his mother;

13 Making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things ye do.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."* (Mark 7: 6.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 24: 1-6.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

March 21.	M.	Wrong Ideas About Religion (Mark 7:1-13)
March 22.	T.	Wrong Ideas About Worship (John 4: 19-26)
March 23.	W.	Wrong Ideas About Prayer (2 Cor. 12: 1-10)
March 24.	T.	Wrong Ideas About Forgiveness (Matt. 18: 21-35)
March 25.	F.	Wrong Ideas About Happiness (Luke 12: 13-21)
March 26.	S.	Wrong Ideas About Serving God (Matt. 25: 31-46)
March 27.	S.	How Please God (Psalm 24: 1-6)

PARALLEL PASSAGE.—Matt. 15: 1-9.

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 30.

Place.—Capernaum.

Persons.—Jesus, his disciples, and certain scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem.

Lesson Links.—In Lesson XI we studied the miraculous feeding of the multitude. When they found that Jesus had left them, they came to Capernaum seeking him. (John 6: 22-24.) When they had found him, he made a speech to them, which John alone records. (See John 6: 25-59.) In that speech he urged them to work for the food which abides to eternal life. This food is Jesus himself. No one literally eats the flesh and drinks the blood of Jesus. It is a figurative expression—we feed on him in a moral and spiritual sense by trusting him, learning of him, and obeying him. He is our daily spiritual food. Because Jesus said that he was the bread of life, and that “he that eateth this bread shall live for ever,” some of his disciples said, “This is a hard saying; who can hear it?” Many of them walked no more with him. “Jesus said therefore unto the twelve, Would ye also go away? Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.”

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Enemies of Jesus Watching (Verses 1, 2)

This group of scribes and Pharisees were from Jerusalem. The local scribes and Pharisees had exhausted their skill in trying to find something against Jesus. Also, on a former occasion, some scribes and Pharisees came down from Jerusalem, and accused Jesus of casting out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of demons. (Matt. 12: 22-37; Mark 3: 22-30.) He had routed these, and they had returned to Jerusalem. Now another group had come down from Jerusalem. This was perhaps a select group. The fame of Jesus was becoming so great that the authorities in Jerusalem felt that something had to be done about it. Hence, we can feel confident that the shrewdest men of Jerusalem were sent on this occasion.

These scribes and Pharisees did not on this occasion find Jesus doing anything for which they could accuse him; but they “had seen that some of his disciples ate their bread with defiled, that is, unwashed, hands.” They could not deny the reality of his miracles; neither had they been able to charge him with violating the law. The best they could do now was to find fault with his disciples—they had seen some of them eating without first washing their hands. They did not charge that the disciples were eating with filthy hands, but that they were violating the traditions of the elders. Matthew reports the Pharisees as saying, “Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.” With the Pharisees, washing hands before eating was a religious duty, no matter how clean the hands might be. The tradition of the elders required it—the hands must not only be actually clean, but must be ceremonially clean. But if they could have proved that the disciples were violating the law, it would not have involved Jesus in personal guilt, unless they could have in some way

involved him in the matter. This was, no doubt, their real design, for they made their complaint to Jesus.

The Tradition of the Elders (Verses 3-5)

The Pharisees claimed that Moses, in addition to the law he wrote, delivered numerous instructions to the elders, and that these were handed down orally from generation to generation; but there is no foundation for such claim. Had there been such unwritten law, it would have been so corrupted in transmitting it orally from generation to generation that it could not have been recognized in a few generations. It would certainly have been lost in those periods of idolatry through which the Jews so often passed. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia says, "The claim made by many that after the days of Ezra there existed a college of 120 called the 'Great Synagogue' cannot be proved. Entirely untenable also is the claim of the traditionally orthodox Jews, that ever since the days of Moses there had been in existence, side by side with the written law, also an oral law, with all necessary explanations and supplements to the written law." It was long forbidden to reduce this supposed oral law to writing. The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia says it was not committed to writing till A.D. 550. Anyone who knows the tendency of religious people to originate new regulations and practices, and then to change, revise, and vary them as the need seems to demand, can easily see how these traditions originated. It seemed necessary to go into this matter of tradition of the elders at length in order that we may understand the nature of the complaint the Pharisees made against the disciples. They did not accuse them of violating the written law, but the unwritten law. Because they regarded this unwritten law to be a sort of explanation and adaptation of the written law, they held it to be more binding than the written law.

Some Traditions Stated.—"For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands diligently, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders; and when they come from the marketplace, except they bathe themselves, they eat not; and many other things there are, which they have received to hold, washings of cups, and pots, and brassen vessels." The market place was the gathering place for all sorts of people. Some of them would be considered ceremonially unclean, and the person who touched such a person would be considered unclean. On the chance that he might have touched such a person or some unclean thing, the Pharisee bathed on coming from the market place; he would not eat till he had bathed. The washing of pots and other cooking utensils was a matter of religion with him. To do all these things as a matter of cleanliness is necessary, but to do them as a religious ceremony, and to require others to do them on the same grounds, is to bind where God has not bound. It is to put human authority on an equality with God's authority, and that is to bring God's authority down on an equality with man's. But people are not so different even today. They develop certain customs that become sacred to them. Such people, like the Pharisees, think it strange that any one claiming to be religious will disregard their customs. The Pharisees regarded people as sinners who disregarded their traditions.

Vain Worship (Verses 6, 7)

Isaiah's words quoted here were spoken to the people of his day. They are words addressed to a class, and not to certain individuals. It was general rather than specific, and applies to any class of people who are like those Pharisees. They pretended to be very devoted to God, but were really devoted to their own affairs and their traditions. They were actors, playing a part; they were pretending to be what they were not. The word translated hypocrite is the word the Greeks applied to an actor on a stage. He acted a part; he was not the person he assumed to be. It is easy to see how the word would come to apply to a person who pretended to be a righteous man when he was not. He wears a pious mask to hide his real character. And these "pious" hypocrites had almost the whole Jewish nation fooled into believing them to be what they pretended to be. How shocked they and their people must have been when Jesus called them hypocrites. They flattered God, wore pious faces, and served the devil. Men must honor God with their lips, but lip service for God and heart service for the devil make one a hypocrite. "But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men." Vain worship is empty worship. Men must worship God, but some worship is vain, sinful. "They that worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The spirit, the heart, must be in the worship, or it is not sincere; and it must be done in truth, according to the truth. Paul said, "Whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son." (Rom. 1: 9.) Again, "But they flattered him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongue. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they faithful in his covenant." (Psalm 78: 36, 37.) It is right to praise God; but to speak words of praise when the heart is not right is to lie to him. Through Ezekiel God said, "Her priests have done violence to my law, and have profaned my holy things." How had they done so? He immediately explained: "They have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they caused men to discern between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them." (Ezek. 22: 26.) The clean things, the holy things, were what God had ordained; the common and unclean things were their own inventions and devices. By mixing man's inventions with God's requirements they profaned, or made common, God's holy things, and also did violence to God's law, for his law prohibited that very thing. (Deut. 12: 32.) And when people today bring into the worship of God things not authorized, such as burning incense, instrumental music, and such things, they profane God's holy worship, and do violence to God's law. To thus legislate for God is to bring God down on a level with man; it is to profane God.

Making Void the Word of God (Verses 8-13)

"Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men." That is the natural and inevitable result. No one can serve two masters. If he begins to follow the doctrines of men, he will gradually come to hold to them more tenaciously than to the commandments of God. "Fanaticism is easily awakened in the

defense of tradition. In the Church of Rome the ecclesiastical regulations, e.g., the Fasts and Feasts, or the celibacy of the clergy and the monastic vows, are enforced with a greater severity than the original requirements of the gospel. The Roman Church, accepting the principle of tradition, has made the precepts of men into doctrines to such a degree that the New Testament is rightly regarded as a danger to the laity. A passage like the one before us is subversive to Roman teaching."—*R. F. Horton, as quoted in Tarbell's Teachers' Guide.* As respects custom and tradition, none of us are free from danger. Not so long ago many religionists held with fanatical devotion to the man-invented mourners' bench system of conversion, and at the same time spoke contemptuously of God's command to be baptized. A certain congregation had the custom of walking forward and putting their contributions in a hat on the table. When the congregation grew larger, to preserve order and prevent confusion, baskets were passed. A brother had become so wedded to the old custom, or tradition, that he quit the Lord's day worship. Rather than surrender a man-made custom, he violated all the requirements concerning the Lord's day worship. It happened to him as Jesus said: "Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition." This was a severe indictment, and it behooves us to look with care lest we also fall under the same condemnation.

An Example.—Moses had commanded all children to honor their fathers and mothers; the penalty for failure to do so was death. (See Ex. 20: 12; 21: 17; Lev. 20: 9.) To honor father and mother is to render due obedience, to respect them, and to provide for their needs in their days of helplessness. This is also commanded in the New Testament: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." It is difficult these days to teach children this lesson, and it requires strength of character on the part of children to render obedience; for to be submissive to parents is not considered "the thing" these days. In a way entirely different from that of the Pharisees we are today making void this commandment of God. "But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is Corban, that is to say, Given to God; ye no longer suffer him to do ought for his father or his mother; making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered." "Corban, which meant originally a sacrifice or gift to God, was used in New Testament times as a mere word of vowing, without implying that the thing vowed would actually be given to God. Thus a man would say 'Corban to me is wine for such a time,' meaning that he took a vow to abstain from wine. Or a man would say to a friend, 'Corban to me for such a time is whatsoever I might be profited by thee,' meaning that for such a time he vowed he would receive neither hospitality nor any other benefit from his friend. Similarly, if a son said to his father or mother, 'Corban is whatsoever thou mightest have been profited by me,' he took a vow not to assist his father or mother in any way, however much they might require it. A vow of this kind was held by the scribes to excuse a man from the duty of supporting his parents, and thus by their tradition they made void the word of God."—*One Volume Commentary.* But this was only one example of the tradition. Jesus adds, "And many such like things ye do."

SOME REFLECTIONS

A Christian has pledged his loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ. If he remains true to his pledge, he will not allow customs and traditions to become sacred to him.

It is hard for some people to see that there is anything wrong in bringing into the work and worship of God anything that appeals to them. They fail to realize that to mix the human and the divine makes void that which is divine.

There is a vain religion, as well as vain worship. Not to put the bridle of truth on the tongue makes vain religion; to bring into the worship things God did not authorize makes vain worship.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The tradition of the elders.

How the tradition made void God's word.

How the principle applies to us.

Vain religion and vain worship.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, place and persons.
What lesson did Jesus teach the multitude who followed him after he fed them?
What is the bread he mentioned?
Why did some disciples quit him?
What question did he ask, and what did Peter say?

Verses 1, 2

Who came down from Jerusalem, and why?
What complaint did they make?
Why such a complaint?

Verses 3-5

What was the tradition of the elders?
How did they transmit this tradition?
When reduced to writing?
How would these traditions originate?
How did the Pharisees regard their tradition?
Give some things required by their tradition.

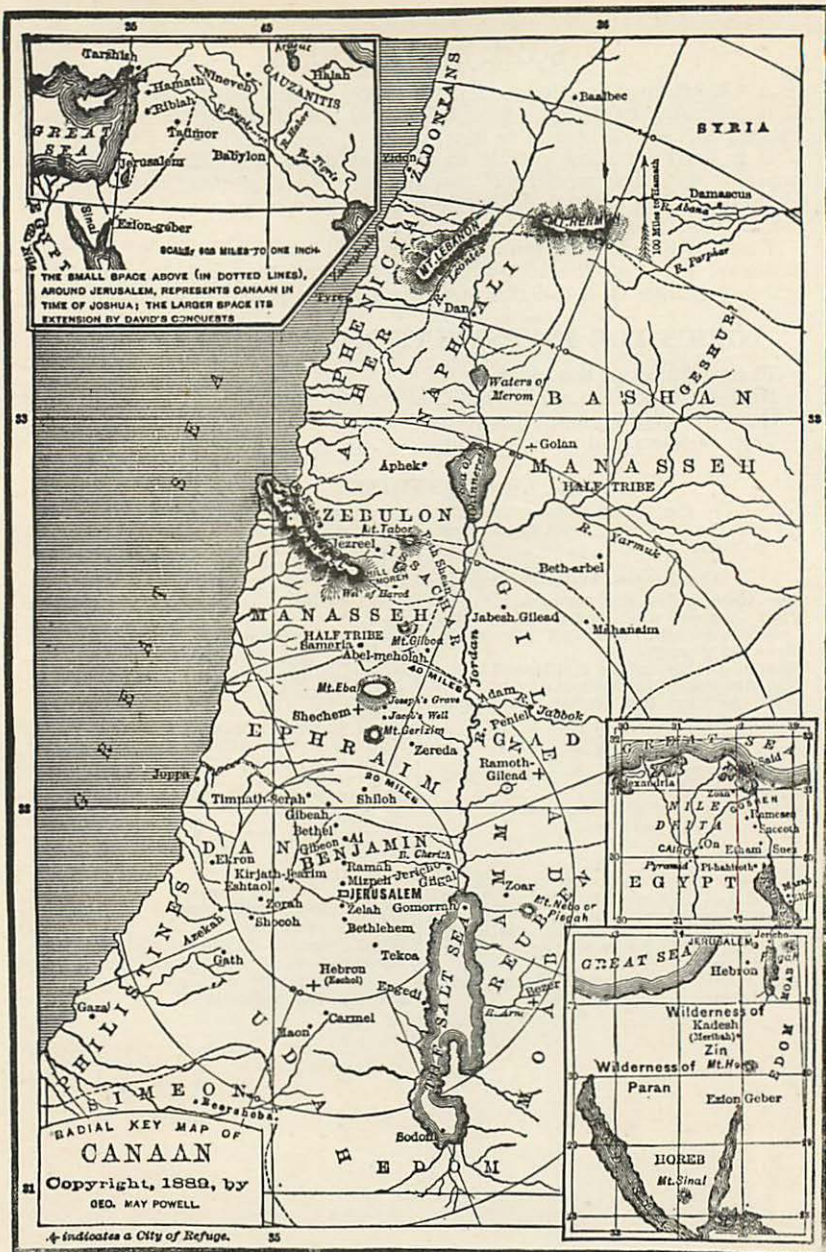
What was right and what was wrong about such practices?
Why did they bathe after coming from the market place?
How may we fall into errors similar to theirs?

Verses 6, 7

Give the quotation from Isaiah.
To whom does it apply?
What does the word hypocrite signify?
What is vain worship?
How must we worship God?
Show how the Jews failed in this.
Discuss Ezek. 22: 26.
How may we render vain worship?

Verses 8-13

What is the result of following tradition?
How do people regard their traditions and inventions?
Give examples.
What example did Jesus give?
How did they thus make void the commandment of God?
Discuss the reflections.



SECOND QUARTER

THE GOSPEL OF SERVICE

(According to Mark)

AIM.—To lead the student to appreciate how Jesus in his life and teachings emphasized service to all men; to help the student to devote his life to the task of building a new world in accordance with the ideals of our Lord.

Lesson I—April 3, 1938

SERVING OTHER RACES

Mark 7: 24-37

24 And from thence he arose, and went away into the borders of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered into a house, and would have no man know it; and he could not be hid.

25 But straightway a woman, whose little daughter had an unclean spirit, having heard of him, came and fell down at his feet.

26 Now the woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by race. And she besought him that he would cast forth the demon out of her daughter.

27 And he said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs.

28 But she answered and saith unto him, Yea, Lord; even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

29 And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the demon is gone out of thy daughter.

30 And she went away unto her house, and found the child laid upon the bed, and the demon gone out.

31 And again he went out from the borders of Tyre, and came through Sidon unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of Decapolis.

32 And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to lay his hand upon him.

33 And he took him aside from the multitude privately, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat, and touched his tongue;

34 And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

35 And his ears were opened, and the bond of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

36 And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it.

37 And they were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well; he maketh even the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"God is no respecter of persons." (Acts 10: 34.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 11: 12-16.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

March 28.	M.	Serving Others Far Away (Mark 7: 24-30)
March 29.	T.	Serving Others Nearer Home (Mark 7: 31-37)
March 30.	W.	Other Races Helping (Jer. 38: 7-10)
March 31.	T.	Helping Other Races (John 4: 7-12)
April 1.	F.	Overcoming Race Prejudice (Acts 10: 28-33)
April 2.	S.	Religious Narrowness Rebuked (Luke 9: 49-56)
April 3.	S.	A Universal Kingdom (Isa. 11: 12-16)

PARALLEL PASSAGE.—Matt. 15: 1-31.

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 30.

Places.—Regions of Tyre and Sidon, also Decapolis. Tyre and Sidon were important cities of Phenicia, situated on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Tyre, the more important of the two, is first mentioned in the Bible in Josh. 19: 29, and is there referred to as a fortified city. It became prominent in Bible history during the reigns of David and Solomon, when Hiram, king of Tyre, furnished so many workers and so much building material for the erection of the temple and the royal palace. Neither Tyre nor Sidon is now important.

Persons.—Jesus, his disciples, the Syrophenician woman, the deaf man, and the people of Decapolis.

Lesson Links.—In our last lesson Jesus taught the great lesson that to teach the doctrines and commandments of men made our service vain. The lesson grew out of the criticism of the Pharisees that the disciples violated the tradition of the elders in eating without washing their hands. Jesus showed how they made void the commandments of God that they might keep their traditions. Then he said to the multitude, "Hear me all of you, and understand: there is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man." Apart from the multitude the disciples asked him to explain what he meant. Jesus explained that nothing a man eats can defile him, for what he eats does not enter into his heart. The heart is the source of evil deeds; "for from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man." The appetites and passions of the flesh may incline us to do certain things, but the plans and purposes to gratify our appetites and passions in a sinful way are formed in the heart.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Jesus Goes to the Borders of Tyre and Sidon (Verse 24)

In Galilee Jesus was kept so busy healing the sick and afflicted that he had little, if any, time to teach and develop his disciples. Besides this, the Pharisees were becoming so active and bitter in their opposition to him that it might be confusing and discouraging to his disciples. Matthew says Jesus withdrew into the parts of Tyre and Sidon. This language shows that he was seeking to get away from the conditions that prevailed in Galilee. In the Gentile territory of Tyre and Sidon he would not be followed by such crowds; neither would the scribes and Pharisees follow him into Gentile territory. "And he entered into a house, and would have no man know it." This language shows plainly that he was seeking quietness. In the excitement in Galilee he could find no opportunity for rest; neither could his disciples find time for serious thinking. But even here "he could not be hid." He had not come here to teach the multitudes nor to heal their sick. It seems that he had not entered into the city of Tyre, but had stopped outside in some quiet place.

The Canaanitish Woman and Her Daughter (Verses 25-30)

Soon after Jesus began his public ministry, "the report of him went forth into all Syria," as we learn from Matt. 4: 24. Many had brought their sick people from that country to Jesus to be healed as he taught and healed the sick and afflicted people in Galilee. Likely, some of those who had seen him in Galilee recognized him and started the report that he was in their midst. Here, as elsewhere, the people who were in distress would not let him rest. "But straightway a woman, whose little daughter had an unclean spirit, having heard of him, came and fell down at his feet." She had heard of the wonderful works Jesus had performed in the country of the Jews; otherwise she would not have known that he could do anything for her afflicted daughter. "Now the woman was a Greek, a Syrophoenician by race." She lived in that part of Syria which was called "Phenicia." But she evidently spoke the Greek language. After the conquest of Alexander the Great, the Jews distinguished the people politically as Jews and Greeks. The Greek language had become a sort of universal language. This woman was greatly distressed for her afflicted child. According to Matthew she said, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a demon." It is remarkable that this Gentile woman was well enough acquainted with the Old Testament promises and the works and claims of Jesus to identify him as the Son of David. She knew of the promise God made to David and believed that Jesus was the promised Son of David. She might have learned of the promises and prophecies from the Jews, or she might have had a copy of the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament. There was both hope and despair in the woman's plea. "Have mercy on me, . . . my daughter is grievously vexed with a demon." There is a certain amount of natural and justifiable selfishness in that plea. The condition of her daughter was heart-rending—an extreme case of demon possession. The mother's own suffering was intense because of the love she had for her suffering daughter; but the relief she so much desired—the relief from her own heart suffering—could be obtained only by the healing of her daughter. Her plea amounted to this: Lift this intolerable burden from my heart by curing my daughter. "But he answered her not a word," as Matthew reports. He acted as if this extreme case of distress and suffering concerned him not at all. Naturally the woman felt that she had been rudely treated. Many would have given up, and gone away in despair, but not she. From Matthew's report it seems that she then went to his disciples to get them to intercede for her, for he reports that the disciples came to Jesus and besought him to send her away, "for she crieth after us." The language shows that she was persistent in her pleadings with them. Evidently they asked him to grant her request so as to get rid of her. They saw no other way to escape her pleadings. To them Jesus said, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." As the next verse says she came to him, it is evident that she had held back for a time to see what effect the plea of the disciples might have. She had made her plea to Jesus before she went to the disciples. Now she comes again to Jesus, and, worshipping him, renewed her plea: "Lord, help me." Again she pleads for herself, but the relief she sought for herself

could be obtained only by the recovery of her daughter. But Jesus answered her, "Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." She knew to whom he referred. She was not surprised that a Jew should refer to the Jews as "the children" and to the Gentiles as dogs, but she was too greatly distressed and too much in earnest to become offended at his seeming rudeness. She recognized that it was not right to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs; the dogs could eat the crumbs. But she would not give up; even these seemingly abrupt words of Jesus gave her grounds for another appeal. Recognizing the words of Jesus as appropriate, she replied, "Yea, Lord; even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." Whatever else we may think of this woman, we must recognize that she was not easily discouraged, and that, even in her distress, she was quick-witted and had a keen sense of humor. If we are but dogs, then give us the dog's portion—let us have the children's crumbs. She took Jesus at his word, and, on his words, based her plea. It would be hard to find a keener reply than she made. "For this saying go thy way; the demon is gone out of thy daughter," said Jesus. Matthew reports these additional words of Jesus: "O woman, great is thy faith." It is surprising that a woman of a heathen people should have such faith. Concerning the faith of another foreigner Jesus said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." (Matt. 8: 10.) The faith of the woman was seen in her persistent efforts to secure the blessings she desired. Faith only would have left her at home with her demon-possessed daughter; but her faith was strong enough to lead her to do all she knew to do, and it secured the blessings she sought. "And she went away unto her house, and found the child laid upon the bed, and the demon gone out." We would expect a person like her to become a substantial member of the church when the full gospel was later preached in her section of the country.

Jesus Passes Through Sidon and Thence into Decapolis (Verse 31)

Though Jesus was near Tyre the record does not show that he went into that city at all. He went on farther north, and passed through Sidon before he turned east. So far as the records inform us, Sidon was the most northerly point visited by Jesus during his entire ministry. A glance at the map will show that Sidon is considerably farther north than is Caesarea Philippi. From Sidon Jesus traveled in a southeasterly direction, and went into the regions east of the Sea of Galilee, the district called Decapolis. The name means "ten cities." As it is said that Jesus passed "through the midst of the borders of Decapolis," before reaching the Sea of Galilee, it must be that he came to the sea near its southern end. On this entire journey, so far as the records inform us, Jesus performed only the one miracle before coming into Decapolis.

Jesus Heals a Deaf Man (Verses 32-35)

Of the events of this visit to Decapolis, Matthew says, "And there came unto him great multitudes, having with them the lame, blind,

dumb, maimed, and many others, and they cast them down at his feet; and he healed them." This is the region where Jesus had cast the demons out of the fierce maniac, whose dwelling was in the tombs. On leaving the man, the evil spirits entered into a drove of hogs, which ran down the hill into the sea, and were drowned. (Mark 5: 1-20.) Such manifestation of power so frightened the people that they asked Jesus to depart from them. But the man out of whom the demons were cast "went his way, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men marvelled." This man's cure and his so persistently publishing it so stirred the interest of the people that they welcomed Jesus on his return visit, and brought to him their variously afflicted people to be healed. "And they cast them down at his feet." What a silent plea for mercy! But, characteristic of the direct style of Mark, he selects a prominent one out of these many cures and tells how it was done. This man was deaf, "and had an impediment in his speech." He spoke with difficulty. He evidently had learned to speak before he became deaf, but had been so long deaf that he made himself understood with difficulty. Just why Jesus proceeded in this case as he did we know not. "And he took him aside from the multitude privately, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat, and touched his tongue," and, looking up to heaven, said, "Be opened." "And his ears were opened, and the bond of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain."

Jesus Charged the People Not to Tell (Verses 36, 37)

On this occasion, as on many others, Jesus charged the people not to tell about the miracle. Publicity would create excitement and bring together too many people. But, when, on his former visit to this section, he cast the legion of demons out of the maniac, the people were so hostile toward him, that they needed to know more of him; hence, he told the man to go and tell what great things the Lord had done for him. But now the more he charged the people not to tell any one, the more persistent they became in telling it. The very fact that they knew he wanted to do such things without notoriety made them all the more anxious to tell it abroad. Their verdict this time was so different from what it was on his former visit: "And they were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well." Had they known who he really was, they would not have been astonished at any powers he might have shown. When we come to recognize Jesus as the Son of God, then it is easy for us to believe that he had all the powers claimed for him.

SOME REFLECTIONS

We would not have known how great was the faith of the Syrophenician woman had Jesus granted her request at the first asking. His apparent indifference brought out the persistence of her faith. Her persistence is a rebuke to our faintheartedness.

If our faith is as strong as hers, we will persist in our prayers, and, like Jacob, we will not give up till we are blessed. Jesus gave a parable (Luke 18: 1-8) to encourage people to be persistent in prayer, "to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint."

At his first visit to Decapolis the people did not know Jesus. Not knowing him, they rejected him, and asked him to depart from their midst. Their ignorance blinded them to the greatest good that had ever come their way. Ignorance is always a cheat and a fraud. Were it not for ignorance people would now accept the Lord. For lack of knowledge people perish.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Why the Pharisees opposed Jesus.

Facts about Tyre.

The need for controversy and of occasional rest from controversy.

The work of one man—the man out of whom a legion of demons was cast.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.

Give facts about the places.

Give substance of last lesson.

What did Jesus say to the multitude?

Discuss the explanation Jesus gave to his disciples.

Whence come all our deeds?

Verse 24

Why would Jesus go into a foreign country?

To what region did he go?

Verses 25-30

How had the people of Syria learned about Jesus?

How did they learn that he was in their midst?

Who came to him, and why?

What plea did she make?

What seems singular in her plea?

What did Jesus do?

To whom did she then go?

What did the disciples then do?

Again what plea did the woman make?

What reply did Jesus make?

What reply did she make?

What did Jesus then say?

What other time did Jesus speak of a great faith?

Verse 31

From near Tyre what journey did Jesus make?

To what country did he go from Sidon?

What was the farthest northern point visited by Jesus?

Verses 32-35

What does Matthew say of the events of this visit to Decapolis?

What occurred the first visit Jesus made to this section?

What was then the attitude of the people toward him?

What likely changed them?

What miracle does Mark mention?

Describe a miracle.

Verses 36, 37

What charge did Jesus give the people?

What effect did it have?

What did the people say of Jesus this time?

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson II—April 10, 1938

FINDING OURSELVES IN SERVICE

Mark 8: 27-38

27 And Jesus went forth, and his disciples, into the villages of Caesarea Philippi: and on the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Who do men say that I am?

28 And they told him, saying, John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but others, One of the prophets.

29 And he asked them, But who say ye that I am? Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.

30 And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

32 And he spake the saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

33 But he turning about, and seeing his disciples, rebuked Peter, and saith, Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men.

34 And he called unto him the multitude with his disciples, and said unto them, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

35 For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it.

36 For what doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life?

37 For what should a man give in exchange for his life?

38 For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"What doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life?" (Mark 8: 36.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 1: 31-39.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

April 4. M.	Finding Christ in His Lordship (Mark 8: 27-33)
April 5. T.	Finding Ourselves Through Service (Mark 8: 34-38)
April 6. W.	Obedient Service (Rom. 6: 15-23)
April 7. T.	Fruitful Service (Phil. 1: 19-26)
April 8. F.	Enduring Service (Matt. 7: 24-29)
April 9. S.	Rewarded Service (Matt. 25: 34-40)
April 10. S.	Commissioned for Service (Heb. 1: 10-14)

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 16: 13-27; Luke 9: 18-26.

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 30.

Place.—Near Cesarea Philippi. This was a city of some importance, about one hundred and twenty miles north of Jerusalem. It was originally called Banias, or Paneas; but when Philip improved it, he changed its name to Cesarea Philippi. It is strange that so careful a student as McGarvey should say that this was the farthest point north visited by Jesus, when the previous chapter tells of his visit to Sidon, several miles farther north than Cesarea Philippi. See map.

Persons.—Jesus and his disciples.

Lesson Links.—Immediately following the events of our last lesson Jesus fed four thousand men, besides women and children. He had only seven loaves and a few fishes with which to feed them. It seems that this miracle occurred on the east side of the Sea of Galilee. From that point he crossed over to Dalmanutha. Here the Pharisees asked him to show them a sign from heaven. They had seen him feed the hungry and heal all manner of sicknesses, and should have believed in him. Now they pretend that they would believe, if he would show them a sign from heaven. Perhaps they had in mind something like that which accompanied the giving of the law. Jesus did not propose to heed the demands of his enemies. As Jesus and his disciples sailed toward Bethsaida, he told them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, meaning, as he explained to his disciples, for them to beware of the teaching of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. It is just as necessary now that we beware of the doctrine of men as it was then. When we

follow the doctrines of men, it is a case of the blind being led by the blind.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Who Is Jesus? (Verses 27-30)

It appears that Jesus started on the present journey from Bethsaida, or from near Bethsaida. With his disciples he journeyed north into the regions of Cesarea Philippi. We know not how many disciples accompanied him, but from Acts 1: 21-26 we learn that at least two, besides the apostles accompanied him in his journeys. The time of his death was drawing near, and he needed to get his disciples away from the bickerings of the Pharisees, so that he might establish them firmly in the faith.

Various Opinions.—Jesus came into the world to save sinners; but he could not save any one who did not have the right attitude toward him. He could not therefore be indifferent concerning the attitude people had toward him. He also wanted his disciples to think seriously as to who he was. So he asked them, "Who do men say that I am?" Every one who had seen Christ and his mighty works, or even heard of him and his works, had formed some sort of opinion about him, or else had come to believe firmly in him as the Son of God and the Savior of men. His life, miracles, and teaching challenged the attention of men. It is even so today. Men who think cannot be indifferent as to who he is, or as to what he did and taught. It is not surprising that people then formed various opinions concerning him. Some thought he was John the Baptist risen from the dead, some were of the opinion that he was Elijah, and others that he was Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. In saying these things about Jesus, the people were expressing mere opinions concerning him, and not confessing faith. There is considerable difference between opinions and faith.

The Great Question.—Jesus had been teaching his disciples and performing innumerable miracles in their presence. He had been seeking to lead them beyond mere opinion to the point where they could take their stand on the firm ground of abiding faith. It was necessary that they reach that point; otherwise they would be worth nothing to him as apostles. If they had not reached that point, then they had failed in his plans for them. Mere opinion, no matter how favorable it might be toward him, was not sufficient. So he puts the question direct to them: "But who say ye that I am?" So far as the carrying out of his plan for the world's redemption was concerned, it mattered little what Herod thought about him, or what opinions the people had as to who he was, or what the Pharisees and the doctors of the law said about him; but everything he had mapped out for these apostles to do depended on what they thought and said. "But who say ye that I am?" was therefore a basic test question.

The Answer of Faith.—"Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus had put the question to all of the disciples; and Peter, always prompt to speak, answered for all of them. The truth that Peter confessed—that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God—is the central truth of the entire Bible, the foundation upon which the whole structure of Christianity rests. Eliminate that truth, and the Bible is an empty shell and

Christianity a huge and baseless fabrication. But to believe that Jesus is the Christ involves a little more now than it did then. The disciples then knew that a man called Jesus existed, for they associated with him daily; they believed that this Jesus with whom they associated was the Christ, the Son of God. We now believe that Jesus lived on the earth, and that he is the Christ, the Son of God. It is not enough to believe that a being called Jesus lived; any thoughtful skeptic believes that Jesus lived on earth. We must believe that this Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Tell No Man.—The prophets had foretold the coming of one who would be the Messiah, or the Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of men. The Jews had looked forward to his coming. At the baptism of Jesus a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son." Some of these disciples may have heard that voice. Some of them heard the testimony of John the Baptist. (John 1: 29-37.) They all knew the prophecies; and all of them had seen the mighty works of Jesus, and had heard his matchless teaching, and had read his character as revealed in his daily life. They had honestly weighed all the evidence, and were fully convinced that he was the Messiah foretold by the prophets. Their faith was an intelligent faith, and yet it was produced by testimony. But he was not yet ready to be announced as the Christ. "And he charged them that they should tell no man of him"; or, as Matthew records it, "Then charged he the disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ."

Jesus Foretells His Suffering and Death (Verse 31)

"And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things"—suffer many things besides his death. He must suffer the lies and slanders of his enemies, the betrayal of Judas, the agonies of Gethsemane, the cowardice of his disciples, and the taunts and cruelties connected with his trial and unjust condemnation. "And be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes." As the Jewish Sanhedrin was composed of these classes, this likely refers to their rejection and condemnation of him. It was they who delivered him up to Pilate to be killed. "And be killed." Previous to this Jesus had given obscure intimations of his approaching death, but it seems that no one understood what he meant. (See Matt. 12: 38-40; Mark 2: 20; John 2: 19-22; 3: 14.) Now he tells them plainly that he was to be killed. According to Matthew, he told them that he must go to Jerusalem to suffer and be killed. "And after three days rise again." Matthew reports him as saying, "And the third day be raised up." It is certain that Jesus did not use both expressions, and it is equally certain that both expressions mean the same thing. With the Jews "after three days" meant after three days had come, rather than after three days had passed. (See 1 Kings 12: 5, 12.)

Peter's Rashness Rebuked (Verses 32, 33)

"And Peter took him," perhaps aside from the other disciples, "and began to rebuke him." According to Matthew Peter said, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee." To us now this act of Peter seems very rash. It was even so, but Peter could not

see why Jesus should suffer himself to be put to death. He believed Jesus to be the Messiah; how could he bring redemption to Israel if he were put to death? Ignorance was at the bottom of his rashness, and his rashness and ignorance show that the apostles were not yet prepared to preach Christ to others. Jesus rebuked Peter, saying, "Get thee behind me, Satan." The Greek word here translated "Satan" is "diabolos," which means a slanderer, or accuser, or adversary. It came to be applied to the devil, because he is the great slanderer, and the persistent accuser and adversary of man. It is here applied to Peter, not because he then stood for Satan or was the embodiment of the evil one, but because he had made himself an adversary of Christ's announced plans. "For thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." Peter's mind still ran along worldly lines. He did not realize that God would work out his plans in his own way. He had in mind a triumphant Christ, but one who would triumph over his enemies without the suffering of death. He had not yet outgrown the Jewish conception of the Messiah and his kingdom. Peter minded, that is, had in mind, the things of men, a king and a kingdom like men have. For having such thoughts Jesus rebuked him. It is a rebuke to all who today think of Christ's kingdom as a material kingdom, as Peter did.

Following Jesus (Verse 34)

Although Jesus was in a region of country he had not before visited, a multitude soon gathered about him. It appears that they stood off and did not press upon him, as some of the crowds in Galilee had done; for it said that he called them unto him. "And said unto them, If any man would come after me." "Any man"—the way is open to all. It is, "Whosoever will." The disciples, being Jews, would not then see the full significance of that "any man," for Jews thought the Messiah was for the Jews. "Would come"—literally, wills to come. There must be the desire and the will to come. And if any one wills to come, "let him deny himself." This, of course, means that he must give up his life of ease and self-indulgence, but it means more than that. He must give up his own ways—must bring his own will into subjection to the Lord's will. We like to have our own way, we like to follow our own ideas of things, we like the idea of doing as we please; but even in this matter we must deny ourselves, and usually this is the most difficult point in denying self. "And take up his cross." It is said that the condemned criminal had to carry his own cross to the place of execution, suffering the taunts and jeers of the people along the way. O the shame of it! The most hardened criminal must have felt the sting of it. So the cross is a symbol, not only of death, but of shame and reproach also. The world scoffs at the Christian and persecutes him, and this cross he must bear—not grudgingly and rebelliously, as did the condemned criminal, but voluntarily, willingly, gladly, even though it lead to death. "And follow me." In the life that he lived and the sufferings he endured, Jesus left an example for us to follow. (1 Pet. 2: 21.) "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked." (1 John 2: 6.)

Saving and Losing Life (Verses 35-38)

Save—Lose; Lose—Save.—Jesus here speaks of life in a lower and a higher sense. Whosoever devotes himself to the interests and pleasures of this present life shall lose eternal life and also the best things of this life; whosoever seeks eternal life, though he lose this life, shall gain the life that is life indeed. What if the way of the cross does lead to death? It will be only the losing of temporal life, but the gaining of the life that is infinitely more important.

Profit and Loss.—To gain the whole world would be only a temporal gain. What would that amount to, if a person lost his life in gaining it? No temporary gain can compensate for the loss of eternal life. In losing that, we lose all things else. We need to cultivate a true sense of values.

No Exchange Price.—There is nothing that a man can give in exchange for his lost soul. You may now give your all to the Lord and be rewarded with eternal life, but after death you will have nothing to give.

Ashamed.—It seems strange that any one should be ashamed of Christ; yet it is even so. Ashamed of our Creator, ashamed of him who died for us, ashamed of him who is King of kings, and who holds our destinies in his hands! Of such Christ will be ashamed in their greatest hour of need.

SOME REFLECTIONS

If we do not believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, let us not be hypocritical in pretending to believe in him at all.

Do the conditions of discipleship laid down by the Savior seem to make Christianity a hard life? It is not a hard life, though it requires determination to succeed.

And does the way of the cross lead to death? What of it? No matter into what channel you cast your lot in life, the end of that channel is death. To be a Christian is to have hope even in death.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Faith and opinion.

The additional items mentioned by Matthew (16: 17-19).

Losing life—gaining life.

A lesson in profit and loss.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
Give facts about Caesarea Philippi.
Give facts about feeding the four thousand men.
Where did he then go?
Tell about the Pharisees asking for a sign from heaven.
On the way to Bethsaida, what warning did Jesus give?

Verses 27-30

What evidence that others besides the twelve accompanied Jesus?
Why was the attitude of the people toward Jesus important?
What question did he ask his disciples?
What was the answer?
Did the people have faith, or opinions?
Why was the attitude of the apostles important?
What did he ask them?

What was the answer?
 In what way is the truth they confessed important?
 What must we now believe?
 How was their faith produced?
 What did he charge them?

Verse 31

What did he begin to teach them?
 Name some of the things he would suffer?
 Who would take the lead in having him killed?

Verses 32, 33

What did Jesus say to Peter?
 What did he mean?
 What did he mean by saying, "Thou mindest not the things of God"?

Verse 34

What did Jesus say to the multitude?
 Let students discuss each item in the statement of Jesus.

Verses 35-38

Have a different student to discuss each verse of this section.
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson III—April 17, 1938

THE VICTORIOUS SERVANT

Acts 2: 22-36

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.

29 Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day.

30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne;

31 He foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.

32 This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses.

33 Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear.

34 For David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself,

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

35 Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—"This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses." (Acts 2: 32.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Phil. 2: 5-10.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

April 11. M.	The Victorious Servant (Acts 2: 22-32)
April 12. T.	The Exalted Servant (Acts 2: 33-36)
April 13. W.	The Victory Foretold (Isa. 53: 7-12)
April 14. T.	The Victory Witnessed (Acts 1: 6-9)
April 15. F.	Man's Fairest Hope (1 Cor. 15: 19-26)
April 16. S.	Risen with Christ (Col. 3: 1-7)
April 17. S.	The Preeminent Name (Phil. 2: 5-10)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—According to Usher, A.D. 30; according to Hales, A.D. 31. A.D. 31 seems the more probable. Day: Pentecost, one of the three annual feasts of the Jews.

Place.—Jerusalem, the capital city of the Jews.

Persons.—The Holy Spirit, the twelve apostles, and a great crowd of Jews. Many of these Jews had but recently been the cause of the crucifixion of Jesus.

Lesson Links.—Jesus selected twelve men to be his witnesses and the proclaimers of his gospel, "to whom he also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God." (Acts 1: 3.) At one of these appearances, he said, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24: 46-49.) To prepare them for this great work Jesus taught and trained them during his personal ministry. To make their work infallible, Jesus promised them the Holy Spirit. "But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you." (John 14: 26.) "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth." (John 16: 13.) "And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2: 1-4.) A multitude soon gathered about the apostles. Peter's sermon followed.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The First Argument—What the Jews Knew (Verses 22-24)

"Ye men of Israel." Verses 14 and 22 show that Peter addressed the Jews of Jerusalem and Judea. They were the ones who knew of the works of Jesus. As Jesus was a common name among the Jews, Peter identifies this Jesus as 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." The three terms—mighty works, wonders, signs—are not synonyms, but all may on occasions refer to the same thing. A sign was a mighty work, or miracle, wrought in connection with some preacher or prophet to show that God was with him and approved his preaching or prophesying. This miracle sign might be so spectacular as to cause men to wonder. In such cases it was a miracle, and a wonder, and a sign; such were the stilling of the storm and the calming of the raging sea. Peter reminded his hearers that they knew of the

mighty works which Jesus did. As we have only a brief report of what Peter said, we can feel sure that he called their attention to such well-known miracles as causing the blind man to see (John 9), and the raising of Lazarus from the dead. The Jews of Jerusalem and Judea had personal knowledge of these noted miracles, as well as of many others. Peter could make effective use of such miracles. God sent Jesus into the world to die for sinners; this was according to his own counsel or will. By promise and prophecy he had made known that Jesus would come and die for man; this was his foreknowledge, that is, knowledge made known before the event took place. Through betrayal by Judas and by the injustice of the Jewish high court Jesus was delivered up to the Romans to be crucified. The Romans were lawless men, that is, men without God's law. God used all these men to carry out his plans and purposes because they were each one fitted in character for the work each one did. God did not make them fitted for the work they did; they fitted themselves for just such deeds, and God used them. That is, he overruled their wicked designs and purposes to carry out his own plans. They were responsible for what they did, and all were therefore guilty of murdering the Son of God. They could have known better. But God raised him from the dead. If he had not been raised, he would not have been what he claimed to be. "And if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain." (1 Cor. 15: 14.) "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep." (1 Cor. 15: 20.) The resurrection of Jesus was the crowning proof that he was the Christ, the Son of God. "Who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. 1: 4.) God had determined that he should be raised from the dead; it was not possible therefore for death to hold him.

David's Testimony Presented (Verses 25-28)

The use Peter makes of Psalm 16: 8-11 shows that, at least, that part of the sixteenth Psalm refers to Christ. It is written as if Jesus was doing the talking. We should therefore read and study the words without thought of David, but as if they were words uttered by Jesus in person. "I beheld the Lord always before my face." This is expressive of intimate relationship. "On my right hand"—always near to help and to encourage Jesus, so that he might not be moved from the right way of life. Because of this nearness of the Father, the heart of Jesus was glad, and his tongue rejoiced. Not only so, but his flesh dwelt in hope of a speedy resurrection from the grave. That this hope was well grounded is shown by the fact that Jesus did rise from the dead. His flesh dwelt in hope, because he was assured that God would not leave his soul in Hades nor allow his body to decay. For "Hades" the King James, or Authorized, Version has "hell"; but Hades is not hell, not the final abode of the wicked, nor is it the grave. It is the unseen state. The body goes to the grave; the soul, or spirit, goes to Hades, where it remains till the resurrection. The body of Jesus was buried in the tomb, but did not remain there long enough to decay; his soul went to Hades, but did not remain there; for he was raised from the dead. God had

made known to Jesus the ways of life; that is, had made known to him that he would be brought back to life from the dead; and by bringing Jesus back to heaven, back into God's presence, he would make him full of gladness. On the night of his betrayal Jesus prayed, "And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (John 17: 5.)

Peter's Application of David's Words (Verses 29-31)

David had used the pronoun of the first person—I, my, me—but could not have been referring to himself; for he died, was buried, and his tomb was still with them. His body therefore saw corruption. The prophecy therefore did not apply to David, but it did apply to Jesus of Nazareth. God had sworn with an oath that of the fruit of David's loins he would set one upon David's throne. "When thy days are fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, that shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom," so said Nathan. (2 Sam. 7: 12.) This seed was to be set on David's throne, not after David arose from the dead, but while he slept with his fathers—while he was still in his tomb. Being a prophet, "he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption." Hence God's promise to David and David's prophecy find their fulfilment in Jesus. They could not apply to any other.

The Apostles Were Witnesses (Verse 32)

"This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses." A witness testifies to matters concerning which he is supposed to have personal knowledge. A trustworthy witness tells what he knows; a false witness tells what he does not know, or gives a false coloring to what he does know. Were the apostles trustworthy witnesses? They could not have been mistaken as to whether Jesus was crucified and lived again. They claimed to have seen him repeatedly after he arose. They were too well acquainted with him to be mistaken as to his identity. They testified that they talked with him, ate with him, and saw the wounds in his hands, his feet, and his side. They could not have been mistaken. They either told the truth, or they told what they knew to be false. Were they sincere in what they said? The fact that witnesses are chosen and trained to give testimony ordinarily discredits their testimony, but in this case it makes their testimony stronger. Jesus did not rely on the testimony of casual acquaintances—they might be mistaken. The apostles could not have been mistaken. And the circumstances under which they gave their testimony precludes the possibility of their giving false testimony. Men may give false testimony to evade detection in shame or crime, or to gain some worldly ends; but the apostles had no such motives. All worldly motives would have induced them to be quiet. Their Lord had recently been crucified, and they were in the midst of his enemies. To speak out for him might bring upon them the same fate. If they testified for him they faced poverty, persecution, and death. Nothing but an impelling conviction that they

must tell the truth moved them to tell their hearers that they had crucified the Christ.

What the Jews Then Saw and Heard Used as Evidence (Verse 33)

As further evidence that Jesus had been raised from the dead and exalted to God's right hand, Peter referred to what his hearers then saw and heard. After the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit, this multitude came together. It seems that they saw the tongues parting asunder, like as of fire, sitting on each of the apostles. They also heard them speaking in various languages. They had been greatly astonished, and had asked one another, "What meaneth this?" Peter now tells them what it meant; it meant that the Jesus whom they crucified had been exalted at God's right hand, and "having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear." They could not deny the evidence of their own eyes and ears. They were bound to recognize that the recipients of such demonstrations were better able to explain what it meant than they were. They could not explain what they saw and heard; they could not deny Peter's explanation. Hence, Jesus must be by the right hand of God exalted.

God Hath Made Jesus Both Lord and Christ (Verses 34-36)

David had not ascended into the heavens. That was certain; they all knew it. His body was still in the tomb. Yet he had said, "Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." This is a quotation from Psalm 110: 1. It could not apply to David; it did apply to Jesus whom the Jews crucified. He is now at God's right hand, where he is to remain till he has put all enemies under his feet. His war of conquest is now going on, and all Christians are soldiers in his army. Of this war and our part in it Paul says, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh (for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds); casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. 10: 3-5.) "For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death." (1 Cor. 15: 25, 26.) Death will be abolished when all the dead are raised. When that is done, he will deliver up the kingdom to God the Father. (Verse 24.) Hence, at God's right hand Jesus must sit till all the dead are raised.

Peter's Conclusion.—Peter's arguments could not be disputed. The Holy Spirit who knew exactly what to say was talking through Peter. "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." To see the effects of the sermon the student should read verses 37-41. The printed text of our lesson shows how Jesus gained the victory over death; we must follow his servants in their labors to see how he gained victories in his warfare against sin and Satan.

The full extent of his victory will not be seen till the redeemed are glorified in heaven.

SOME REFLECTIONS

The Holy Spirit used Peter's vocal organs to speak to the people. Whatever results were effected by that sermon were effected by the Holy Spirit. The incident shows how the Holy Spirit converts people.

The words spoken on that occasion are still the words of the Holy Spirit, and are as powerful now as then. Did you ever stop to think what would happen to many sermons, if in the midst of the sermon the Holy Spirit should begin to use the preacher's vocal organs as he did Peter's? The thought is exciting.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The apostles as witnesses.

The apostles as announcers of the gospel.

What began on Pentecost at Jerusalem?

The Holy Spirit and the apostles.

How the Holy Spirit converts people.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
Why did Jesus select apostles?
How were they qualified for their work?
When and where were they to begin?
When did the Holy Spirit come upon them?
What resulted from the Holy Spirit's coming?

Verses 22-24

To whom did Peter speak?
How had Jesus showed that God approved him?
Discuss the words mighty works, wonders, and signs.
Of what did Peter remind his hearers?
Name some miracles that Jesus performed in and near Jerusalem.
What is God's foreknowledge?
By whom was Jesus delivered up?
In what sense were the Romans lawless?
What does Paul say about the resurrection of Jesus?

Verses 25-28

From what Psalm did Peter quote?
Show that David was not speaking of himself.
Why did the flesh of Jesus rest in hope?
What is Hades?
Discuss the last verse of the quotation.

Verses 29-31

How did Peter show that David did not speak of himself?
What had God promised David?
When was one to sit upon David's throne?
Does Peter's argument show that Jesus was then on David's throne?

Verse 32

Repeat verse 32.
What is a witness?
When is a witness trustworthy?
Show that the apostles were dependable witnesses.

Verse 33

Repeat verse 33.
What had the multitude seen and heard?
What had they asked?
What explanation did Peter give?

Verses 34-36

What other prophecy did Peter quote?
From what Psalm did he quote?
Jesus is to sit at God's right hand till when?
What part have we in this war of conquest?
Discuss 2 Cor. 10: 3-5.
Jesus must reign till when?
What is the last enemy to be destroyed, and when will it be destroyed?
Repeat Peter's conclusion.
Give some results of Peter's sermon.
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IV—April 24, 1938

RECEIVING VISION FOR SERVICE

Mark 9: 2-10

2 And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them;

3 And his garments became glistering, exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them.

4 And there appeared unto them Elijah with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

5 And Peter answereth and saith to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

6 For he knew not what to answer; for they became sore afraid.

7 And there came a cloud overshadowing them: and there came a voice out of the cloud, This is my beloved Son: hear ye him.

8 And suddenly looking round about, they saw no one any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

9 And as they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, save when the Son of man should have risen again from the dead.

10 And they kept the saying, questioning among themselves what the rising again from the dead should mean.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“This is my beloved Son: hear ye him.” (Mark 9: 7.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Heb. 1: 1-9.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

April 18. M.	The Transfigured Christ (Mark 9: 2-10)
April 19. T.	Moses Sees God (Ex. 33: 8-11)
April 20. W.	Daniel's Vision (Dan. 7: 9-14)
April 21. T.	Saul's Vision (Acts 9: 10-19)
April 22. F.	Peter's Vision (Acts 10: 9-16)
April 23. S.	John Sees Jesus (Rev. 1: 13-18)
April 24. S.	The Son's Heritage (Heb. 1: 1-9)

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 17: 1-9; Luke 9: 28-36.

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 30.

Place.—A high mountain.

Persons.—Jesus, Moses, Elijah, Peter, James, and John.

Lesson Links.—Only one verse comes between lesson two and this lesson. In that verse Jesus promised that some then present would not die till they had seen the kingdom of God come with power. This implies plainly that some would die before the kingdom came. Judas died; so did Jesus. Some of the disciples present, who were not apostles, may also have died.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Jesus Transfigured (Verses 2, 3)

“And after six days.” Six days after the events studied in lesson two. Luke says it was about eight days after these events. Luke counted the day of the events of lesson two and the day of the transfiguration, making eight days in all; Mark counted the intervening

six days. "Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John"—the same three whom he took with him into the room when he raised from the dead the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5: 35-43), and whom he later took aside with him in the garden of Gethsemane to pray (Matt. 26: 36, 37). We are not told why Jesus selected these three to be with him on these important occasions; but we can rest assured that there was a reason, and that he did not do it through mere favoritism. Their increase of faith because of these lessons and experiences would be a great stimulus to the faith of their less aggressive fellow apostles. "And bringeth them up into a high mountain." An ancient tradition held this to be Mount Tabor, but that idea has been abandoned. They were in the regions of Cesarea Philippi six days before the transfiguration, and Mount Tabor is some distance southwest of the Sea of Galilee. Besides, this mountain into which they went was a high mountain. Mount Tabor is not a high mountain, rising only about two thousand feet above sea level. Mount Hermon, near where Jesus was shortly before the transfiguration, is a high mountain, rising ten thousand feet above sea level. The indications are that Mount Tabor was inhabited at that time. Mark says he took them "apart by themselves." They went where they would be alone. Luke says they went there to pray. On some bench, or tableland, of Mount Hermon, they would find a suitable place where they could pray without being disturbed. Not the least expectation did Peter, James, and John have as to the experience that was to be theirs, as they trudged up that mountain. The indications are that the transfiguration occurred during the nighttime, for Luke speaks of their coming down the next day. (Luke 9: 37.) For some reason Jesus wanted to spend a season in prayer, with none present but Peter, James, and John; and he wanted these three to be present at his transfiguration. There was purpose in what he did. Being human as well as divine, he was perhaps depressed in spirit. Peter's confession, shared by the other disciples, had been encouraging; but his immediately rebuking Jesus for saying that he must go to Jerusalem and be killed had been very disappointing. His rebuke of Peter had been severe. The incident may have had an unfavorable effect on Peter; also on James and John, for they were also of the fiery temper. Jesus had brought the disciples away from the increasing turmoil and strife stirred up by the growing antagonism of the scribes and Pharisees, so that he might so thoroughly teach them that they would enter fully into his plans and purposes, but when he had told them of his approaching death—the main purpose of his coming into the world—they had rebelled at the thought. It was disappointing and depressing. Besides this depressing fact, the shadow of the cross, now growing darker each day, would add to the gloom and depression of the hour. Along these lines he must have prayed, for the answer to his prayer was such as to encourage him beyond words to express, and served also to have a fine effect on these fiery leaders of the apostles. "And he was transfigured before them." There had never before been anything like this; hence, there was no word in use that exactly told what occurred. Neither the Greek word here translated transfigured nor the English word transfigured fully expresses the change in the appearance of Jesus. It was therefore necessary to use other words

to describe the change that took place. Luke says, "The fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became white and dazzling." Matthew says, "And his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light." Mark says, "And his garments became glistering, exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them." The shining of his countenance was not a reflected light; neither was it a borrowed light. It was a light that shined from within—the glory of his Deity penetrating the veil of his flesh, giving his disciples a foreview of what he would be. No known process could make clothing so white as were his. How awe-inspiring must have been the sight to the three witnesses as they beheld his glorified appearance!

Moses and Elijah Appear (Verse 4)

"And there appeared unto them Elijah with Moses." Luke says they appeared in glory, that is, they appeared in their glorified state. Moses had died and been buried; Elijah had been translated without dying. Now both appear in glory. Moses stands with Jesus as the lawgiver to the Jews; Elijah, as their great prophet-reformer. It was perhaps through listening to the conversation between Jesus and these other-world visitors that the apostles learned who they were. From Luke we get this additional item: "And spake of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." And the apostles who thought Jesus must not die heard that conversation.

Peter's Proposal (Verses 5, 6)

Peter, always ready to speak out, said, "It is good for us to be here." That was true—it was good for all of them. Their prayers had been answered in a remarkable way, and they would be greatly strengthened for future service and trials. It was such a glorious experience that Peter would have liked to stay with it. So he proposed to Jesus: "Let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." We cannot blame Peter for wanting to prolong that experience, for most of us have been in company that was so delightful and uplifting, that, like Peter, we felt loath to leave it for the harder services of life. Tabernacles, or booths, such as the Jews made at the Feast of the Tabernacles, were made of the boughs of trees. Peter would build three tabernacles, thus paying equal honor to Moses, Elijah, and the Lord. This shows that he did not yet fully understand the divine nature of the Lord. To honor him equally with Moses and Elijah was to dishonor him, but Peter meant it not so. "For he knew not what to answer; for they became sore afraid." In his confusion he knew not what to say, and so he should have said nothing. But there was no need for tabernacles. Moses and Elijah were about to disappear, and Jesus would soon return with the three apostles to active service. With such an experience he could now return to the world of men, and again take up his work of ministering to the needs of suffering humanity. From Luke we learn that Peter suggested the three tabernacles as Moses and Elijah were parting from them.

"Hear Ye Him" (Verses 7, 8)

"And there came a cloud overshadowing them." From Matthew we learn that this cloud appeared while Peter was talking, and that it was a bright cloud. So it appears that Moses and Elijah disappeared in the bright cloud. And as Moses and Elijah disappeared a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son: hear ye him." The appearance of Moses and Elijah on that mountain was impressive and very significant; but their disappearing as the voice said, "This is my beloved Son: hear ye him," was even more so. All that went before in Moses and the prophets found their fulfillment in Jesus, and he was to supersede both of them as lawgiver and prophet. Moses had said, "Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." (Deut. 18: 15.) And so, while Jesus was standing before them in his glorified appearance, and Moses and Elijah were fading from their view, a voice from the Majestic Glory said, "Hear ye him." And that was the climax of the transfiguration scene, to which all the other incidents of the occasion led; and this is the main lesson for us to learn from the transfiguration. Only Jesus is left for us to hear. He is now our king. "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." (Col. 1: 18.) He has made his laws and regulations known through his chosen apostles. The fact, that when they looked around, after hearing the voice, saying, "Hear ye him," "they saw no one any more, save Jesus only with themselves," would remind them in an impressive way that Jesus alone remained to them as their lawgiver and prophet, and that to him alone they must hearken.

Secrecy Enjoined (Verses 9, 10)

They spent the night on the mountain, for Luke says they came down the next day. As they came down from the mountain, Jesus "charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, save when the Son of man should have risen again from the dead." To tell what they had seen might have either of two unpleasant results. Jesus would have their faith strengthened by what they had seen and heard, but he did not want their later testimony as witnesses of his resurrection impaired. Had they told what they had seen, many would not have believed them; and thus their testimony on any other point would have been weakened. And herein is a hint to us. Some people will not believe a thing that is out of the line of their own experience. To tell the unusual to people of that temperament causes them to regard you as "a windy." Most people who have seen much of the world have seen some unusual things, and some have injured their reputation for truth and veracity by injudicious telling of such things. So it is generally best not to tell the unusual things you have seen, though every word of your story be true. It would have been bad for these three apostles to gain a reputation for loose talking. Or, if the other disciples had believed what they said, they would naturally have felt that they had not been treated fairly in being left out of such a glorious experience. This would have been bad. The incidents of that night

were to be kept secret till Jesus arose from the dead. Then those who believed his resurrection would be prepared to believe his transfiguration, and also the appearance of Moses and Elijah. But these three did not know what Jesus meant by his statement that he would rise again from the dead. They would not be questioning among themselves as to what it meant for a person to be raised from the dead, for they had seen that done; they were questioning among themselves as to what he meant by his own resurrection. To us now it seems strange that the apostles were so slow to comprehend the oft-repeated statements of Jesus.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Materialists claim that a man does not have a spirit that survives the death of his body, and that there is therefore no personal existence between death and the resurrection. Now, the Bible clearly states that Moses died and was buried, and also that he appeared on the mountain and talked with Jesus. To offset the force of this, materialists put great stress on the word "vision" in Matthew's report. It is true that the word from which we have vision in Matthew's report sometimes means "a sight divinely granted in an ecstasy or in sleep," but its first meaning is, "that which is seen, a sight, spectacle." That the word in Matt. 17: 9 applies to things actually seen, and not to things appearing in a dream, seems, from the following considerations, not to admit of a doubt:

1. Matthew, Mark, and Luke say plainly that Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James, and John.

2. They say that Moses and Elijah were present and talked with Jesus about his coming death. These things are stated as facts, not dreams. Materialists deny the reality of these things, and would have us believe that Jesus carried on a conversation with men that existed only in his imagination, as if he were mentally unbalanced.

3. The apostles were not asleep—they were not dreaming. The inspired historian (Luke) says, "When they were fully awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him." This leaves no room for doubt.

4. While Matthew reports Jesus as saying, "Tell the vision to no man," Mark says, "He charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen." The vision, then, was not a dream, but what they had seen.

5. Peter speaks very definitely about the reality of that mountain experience: "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there was borne such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: and this voice we ourselves heard borne out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount." (2 Pet. 1: 16-18.)

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Moses.
Elijah.
The transfiguration.
The transforming power of the gospel.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
Discuss Mark 9: 1.

Verses 2, 3

Reconcile Mark's six days and Luke's eight.
On what other occasions did Jesus take Peter, James, and John with him?
Where did they go, and why?
In what way had the disciples been disappointing?
What happened to encourage him?
What is transfiguration?
Describe the appearance of Jesus.

Verse 4

Who appeared to them?
Name the outstanding characteristic of each.
About what did they speak?

Verses 5, 6

What did Peter propose?
What does his proposal show?
Why did Peter speak as he did?

Verses 7, 8

What occurred as Peter was speaking?
What did the voice from heaven say?
Give the significance of these words.
What similar statement had Moses made?
Discuss Paul's words in Col. 1: 18.

Verses 9, 10

What charge did Jesus give Peter, James, and John?
Why this charge?
What do you think of the habit of telling the unusual things one has seen?
Concerning what did the apostles question among themselves?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson V—May 1, 1938

FOLLOWING VISION WITH SERVICE

Mark 9: 14-29

14 And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great multitude about them, and scribes questioning with them.

15 And straightway all the multitude, when they saw him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him.

16 And he asked them, What question ye with them?

17 And one of the multitude answered him, Teacher, I brought unto thee my son, who hath a dumb spirit;

18 And wheresoever it taketh him, it dasheth him down: and he foameth, and grindeth his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast it out; and they were not able.

19 And he answereth them and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I bear with you? bring him unto me.

20 And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him grievously; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

21 And he asked his father, How long time is it since this hath come unto him? And he said, From a child.

22 And oft-times it hath cast him both into the fire and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us.

23 And Jesus said unto him, If thou canst! All things are possible to him that believeth.

24 Straightway the father of the child cried out, and said, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

25 And when Jesus saw that a multitude came running together, he

rebuked the unclean spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.

26 And having cried out, and torn him much, he came out: and the boy became as one dead; insomuch that the more part said, He is dead.

27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and raised him up; and he arose.

28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, *How is it that we could not cast it out?*

29 And he said unto them, This kind can come out by nothing, save by prayer.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*All things are possible to him that believeth.*” (Mark 9: 23.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 26: 19, 20; Rom. 12: 1, 2.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

April 25.	M.	Impotent Disciples (Mark 9: 14-19)
April 26.	T.	The Power of Jesus (Mark 9: 20-29)
April 27.	W.	Vision and Consecration (Isa. 6: 5-13)
April 28.	T.	Sending After Seeing (Acts 19: 3-8)
April 29.	F.	Heeding After Hearing (Ezek. 2: 1-7)
April 30.	S.	The Effect of Vision (Ezek. 12: 21-28)
May 1.	S.	Service After Vision (Acts 26: 12-20)

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 17: 14-20; Luke 9: 37-43.

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably the summer of A.D. 30.

Place.—Near the foot of the mount of transfiguration.

Persons.—Jesus, his disciples, the scribes, the demon-possessed boy and his father, and the multitude.

Lesson Links.—As Jesus and the three apostles were coming down from the mountain of transfiguration, he charged them to tell no man what things they had seen till the Son of man was risen from the dead. This started them to questioning among themselves as to what he meant by rising from the dead. For some reason they did not ask Jesus what he meant. They asked him another question, hoping, perhaps, that in answering that question he would give them some idea as to what he meant by rising from the dead. “How is it that the scribes say that Elijah must first come?” The scribes, no doubt, based their statement on what Jehovah had said through the prophet Malachi: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. 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.” (Mal. 4: 5, 6.) In announcing to Zacharias that a son would be born to him, the angel said, “And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him.” (Luke 1: 17.) John the Baptist was not Elijah in person, but, coming in the spirit and power of Elijah, he was the Elijah that was to come. Hence Jesus said, in answer to the question propounded by the three apostles, “Elijah indeed cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how is it written of the Son of man, that he should suffer many things and be set at nought? But I say unto you, that Elijah is come, and they have also done unto him whatsoever they would, even as

it is written of him." In reporting this conversation Matthew adds this additional item: "Then understood the disciples that he spake unto them of John the Baptist." (Matt. 17: 13.)

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Multitude (Verses 14, 15)

It was humanly impossible for Jesus to escape the multitudes for any length of time. This multitude had gathered about the nine apostles and perhaps some other disciples, whom Jesus had left behind when he, with Peter, James, and John, went up into the mountain the day before. There were also scribes present, and evidently there for no good. It seems that the scribes and Pharisees had made up their minds to harass Jesus at every step. They had become his implacable enemies. In the absence of Jesus they were engaged in controversy with his disciples. Of course they could raise questions and make arguments that the disciples could not then answer; but that fact did not prove that they were right and the disciples wrong. A cause sometimes suffers in controversy, not because it is wrong, but because of the weakness of its defender. Just why the multitude was amazed when they saw Jesus coming is not clear. It must have been that some of the effects of his transfiguration remained with him. When Moses returned from communing with the Lord on Mount Sinai, "the skin of his face shone by reason of his speaking with him," so much so that Aaron and the children of Israel were afraid of him.

The Disciples Fail to Cast Out a Demon (Verses 16-18)

Jesus asked what the controversy was about. One of the multitude proceeded to explain to him the trouble, "I brought unto thee my son, who hath a dumb spirit; and wheresoever it taketh him, it dasheth him down: and he foameth, and grindeth his teeth, and pineth away." Any one who has seen a person have a severe epileptic fit can have a fair idea as to what happened to this man's son when the evil spirit seized him. It is a horrible sight. This man had heard that Jesus was in the community, and had brought his afflicted son, that Jesus might heal him; but he evidently arrived while Jesus was up in the mountain. In the absence of Jesus, the man had asked the apostles to cast out the evil spirit, but they were not able to do so. In sending them out on their first and limited commission, Jesus had given them power to cast out demons, and they did cast them out. (Mark 6: 7, 13.) But in this case they had failed, and, of course, felt greatly humiliated over their failure. To add to their discomfort and humiliation, the scribes were present to embarrass them before the multitude. In the fact of their failure it would be easy for the scribes to ask them questions that they could not answer. They had claimed the power to cast out demons, had tried to do so, and had failed before the entire multitude; what could they say? We can be sure that the scribes were making the most of their failure, and were showing the apostles up in a great way. All of which shows that a person who is in the wrong may

sometimes gain a temporary advantage. But the triumph of the scribes was cut short by the entrance of Jesus on the scene.

"Bring Him Unto Me" (Verse 19)

"O faithless generation." This is a general accusation, and, of course, included the disciples. The evil spirit was more powerful than their faith. There is also a rebuke in the questions Jesus asked: "How long shall I be with you? how long shall I bear with you?" He would soon go away from the earth, and leave his work to be carried on by his followers. Would they have faith enough to succeed, or would they fail, as had the disciples on this occasion? If Jesus did not bear with our weak faith, we would all perish. "Bring him unto me." Jesus was the only hope; he alone could help this man's afflicted son. And even now he is our only hope. He alone can remove all our troubles; he alone can save. But faith on our part is required, faith that is strong enough to lead us to give ourselves wholly into his guidance.

Jesus Questions the Father (Verses 20-22a)

When the man's son was brought to Jesus, "straightway the spirit tare him grievously." For "tare" the marginal reading has "convulsed." The circumstances indicated that convulsed is the preferable word. He had a severe convulsion; "and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming." It was a horrible sight. The evil spirit, as if realizing that he was soon to be cast out, took this last opportunity to torment his helpless victim. Jesus asked the father, "How long time is it since this hath come unto him?" Two or three things could be accomplished by having the father answer this question. He could get the man's mind off the failure the disciples had made; the multitude would learn from the answer that this was a case of long standing. They would learn that it was not mere temporary fits, which had been brought on by overeating, or by some temporary ailment, and which would soon pass away. They could therefore see that curing the boy was a very great miracle. The question and answer would also serve to center the attention of the multitude on what he was about to do. The son had been afflicted with the evil spirit "from a child." The case in our lesson had been demon-possessed "from a child." Certainly his wickedness had not been the cause of his being so early possessed of a demon. And then we read also of the Syrophenician woman, "whose little daughter had an unclean spirit." (Mark 7: 25, 26.) Certainly this little daughter could not have been so unclean in her habits as to be the cause of having this unclean spirit. The fact is, we know not what condition brought about demon possession, but we do know that it was not caused by the wickedness of the person. Besides, there is no indication that demon possession made the person more wicked; it seems rather to have caused bodily or mental troubles. In this case the victim was dumb, and often had severe convulsions. "And oft-times it hath cast him both into the fire and into the waters, to destroy him." His life was in constant danger. He was therefore a great care and a constant source of anxiety to his parents. We can have very little idea as to how much he suffered.

"If Thou Canst!" (Verses 22b-24)

The man was not sure that Jesus could do anything for his son. The failure of the disciples and the criticisms of the scribes may have almost destroyed the faith that led him to bring his son to be cured; so he said, "If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." There is not much faith back of that expression. There seems to be a degree of sarcasm, or else disgust in the reply Jesus made, "If thou canst!" Had the man known who Jesus was, he would never have expressed doubt as to what Jesus could do, but he did not know. Ignorance says many things that knowledge would be ashamed of. "All things are possible to him that believeth." This seems to refer to the need of faith on the part of the man. It does not mean that any man can do anything that he thinks he can do, but that it was possible for Jesus to help any one who believed. That is the sense in which the man took the words of Jesus, as is seen in his reply: "Straightway the father of the child cried out, and said, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." It was a prayer for the Lord to help him to overcome whatever degree of unbelief that stood in the way of his receiving the blessings which he so much desired. Perhaps uncertainties and doubts mixed with our faith often stand in the way of our receiving many of the Lord's blessings.

The Evil Spirit Cast Out (Verses 25-27)

Not all of the multitude had at first gathered around Jesus and the demon-possessed child. Now they come rushing to see what was happening. Perhaps some were really interested in the man and his afflicted son; but there is enough curiosity in most people to lead them to go places where they have no other interest than to see what is going on. It seems that Jesus was not interested in gratifying the curiosity of these people; for when he saw the multitudes running to him, he commanded the evil spirit to come out of the child and to enter no more into him. For once the evil spirit in the child spoke, using, of course, the child's vocal organs. The evil spirit was evidently giving expression to his rage at being cast out of the child. The child had another terrific convulsion, as the evil spirit came out. He became as one dead, so much so that the majority said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him up. After seeing all these things, no one could doubt but that a great miracle had been wrought. In the face of such demonstration of power, the criticisms and jeers of the scribes counted for nothing.

Why the Disciples Failed (Verses 28, 29)

Having performed the miracle Jesus went into a house, leaving the multitude to arrive at their own conclusions concerning him and the miracle. But the disciples still felt the sting of their failure. If a person fails in a laudable attempt, he can profit by his failure, if he learns why he failed. This is the road to improvement. It is to the credit of these disciples that they did not lay the blame on the presence of the scoffing scribes; and yet their question was broad enough to cover any possible cause for the failure. "How is it that we could not cast it out?" Questions like that always demand a straight-

forward answer. When men know that the questioner is in the wrong, they sometimes give an evasive answer, or else try to make it appear that the questioner is not altogether to blame. They try to save his feelings instead of trying to save him from wrong. Such a course is neither honest nor kind. Jesus gave the information the disciples sought. "This kind can come out by nothing, save by prayer." They had left God out—they had depended on their own powers. And why? In Matthew's report of this conversation we have this additional item in the answer Jesus gave: "Because of your little faith." They needed more faith in God, and less in themselves.

SOME REFLECTIONS

No man could by his own power perform miracles. When it appeared that a man was working miracles, it was really God doing it through him.

To become self-centered, as did the disciples, is to lose power to do good. A self-centered person's faith in God is weak, for his faith is mostly in himself. Even now the Christian, in converting sinners and edifying saints, must rely upon God's power and wisdom instead of his own. God's power to save is the gospel.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

John the Baptist as Elijah.

Demons.

Faith and prayer.

How we may save people.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

After the transfiguration, what did

Jesus command the apostles?

What question did they ask him?

Give the reply.

What proof that John the Baptist was the promised Elijah?

Verses 14, 15

On returning to the other disciples, what did Jesus find?

What was the attitude of the scribes toward Jesus?

What of the people when they saw Jesus?

Verses 16-18

What did Jesus ask?

Who replied, and what did he say?

Show that the apostles formerly had power to cast out demons.

What use would the scribes likely make of their failure?

Verse 19

Repeat what Jesus said.
What did he command?

Verses 20-22a

What occurred when the son was brought?

What did Jesus ask?

What was the answer?

What did demons usually do to people?

Verses 22b-24

What plea did the father make?

How does it show a lack of faith?

How did Jesus reply?

What then did the man say?

Verses 25-27

What did Jesus command the evil spirit?

What then happened?

Verses 28, 29

What did the disciples ask Jesus?

Give his reply.

Give Matthew's additional item.

Discuss the reflections.

The full extent of his victory will not be seen till the redeemed are glorified in heaven.

SOME REFLECTIONS

The Holy Spirit used Peter's vocal organs to speak to the people. Whatever results were effected by that sermon were effected by the Holy Spirit. The incident shows how the Holy Spirit converts people.

The words spoken on that occasion are still the words of the Holy Spirit, and are as powerful now as then. Did you ever stop to think what would happen to many sermons, if in the midst of the sermon the Holy Spirit should begin to use the preacher's vocal organs as he did Peter's? The thought is exciting.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The apostles as witnesses.

The apostles as announcers of the gospel.

What began on Pentecost at Jerusalem?

The Holy Spirit and the apostles.

How the Holy Spirit converts people.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

Why did Jesus select apostles?

How were they qualified for their work?

When and where were they to begin?

When did the Holy Spirit come upon them?

What resulted from the Holy Spirit's coming?

Verses 22-24

To whom did Peter speak?

How had Jesus showed that God approved him?

Discuss the words mighty works, wonders, and signs.

Of what did Peter remind his hearers?

Name some miracles that Jesus performed in and near Jerusalem.

What is God's foreknowledge?

By whom was Jesus delivered up?

In what sense were the Romans lawless?

What does Paul say about the resurrection of Jesus?

Verses 25-28

From what Psalm did Peter quote?

Show that David was not speaking of himself.

Why did the flesh of Jesus rest in hope?

What is Hades?

Discuss the last verse of the quotation.

Verses 29-31

How did Peter show that David did not speak of himself?

What had God promised David?

When was one to sit upon David's throne?

Does Peter's argument show that Jesus was then on David's throne?

Verse 32

Repeat verse 32.

What is a witness?

When is a witness trustworthy?

Show that the apostles were dependable witnesses.

Verse 33

Repeat verse 33.

What had the multitude seen and heard?

What had they asked?

What explanation did Peter give?

Verses 34-36

What other prophecy did Peter quote?

From what Psalm did he quote?

Jesus is to sit at God's right hand till when?

What part have we in this war of conquest?

Discuss 2 Cor. 10: 3-5.

Jesus must reign till when?

What is the last enemy to be destroyed, and when will it be destroyed?

Repeat Peter's conclusion.

Give some results of Peter's sermon. Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IV—April 24, 1938

RECEIVING VISION FOR SERVICE

Mark 9: 2-10

2 And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them;

3 And his garments became glistering, exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them.

4 And there appeared unto them Elijah with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

5 And Peter answereth and saith to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

6 For he knew not what to answer; for they became sore afraid.

7 And there came a cloud overshadowing them: and there came a voice out of the cloud, This is my beloved Son: hear ye him.

8 And suddenly looking round about, they saw no one any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

9 And as they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, save when the Son of man should have risen again from the dead.

10 And they kept the saying, questioning among themselves what the rising again from the dead should mean.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“This is my beloved Son: hear ye him.” (Mark 9: 7.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Heb. 1: 1-9.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

April 18. M.	The Transfigured Christ (Mark 9: 2-10)
April 19. T.	Moses Sees God (Ex. 33: 8-11)
April 20. W.	Daniel's Vision (Dan. 7: 9-14)
April 21. T.	Saul's Vision (Acts 9: 10-19)
April 22. F.	Peter's Vision (Acts 10: 9-16)
April 23. S.	John Sees Jesus (Rev. 1: 13-18)
April 24. S.	The Son's Heritage (Heb. 1: 1-9)

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 17: 1-9; Luke 9: 28-36.

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 30.

Place.—A high mountain.

Persons.—Jesus, Moses, Elijah, Peter, James, and John.

Lesson Links.—Only one verse comes between lesson two and this lesson. In that verse Jesus promised that some then present would not die till they had seen the kingdom of God come with power. This implies plainly that some would die before the kingdom came. Judas died; so did Jesus. Some of the disciples present, who were not apostles, may also have died.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Jesus Transfigured (Verses 2, 3)

“And after six days.” Six days after the events studied in lesson two. Luke says it was about eight days after these events. Luke counted the day of the events of lesson two and the day of the transfiguration, making eight days in all; Mark counted the intervening

six days. "Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John"—the same three whom he took with him into the room when he raised from the dead the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5: 35-43), and whom he later took aside with him in the garden of Gethsemane to pray (Matt. 26: 36, 37). We are not told why Jesus selected these three to be with him on these important occasions; but we can rest assured that there was a reason, and that he did not do it through mere favoritism. Their increase of faith because of these lessons and experiences would be a great stimulus to the faith of their less aggressive fellow apostles. "And bringeth them up into a high mountain." An ancient tradition held this to be Mount Tabor, but that idea has been abandoned. They were in the regions of Cesarea Philippi six days before the transfiguration, and Mount Tabor is some distance southwest of the Sea of Galilee. Besides, this mountain into which they went was a high mountain. Mount Tabor is not a high mountain, rising only about two thousand feet above sea level. Mount Hermon, near where Jesus was shortly before the transfiguration, is a high mountain, rising ten thousand feet above sea level. The indications are that Mount Tabor was inhabited at that time. Mark says he took them "apart by themselves." They went where they would be alone. Luke says they went there to pray. On some bench, or tableland, of Mount Hermon, they would find a suitable place where they could pray without being disturbed. Not the least expectation did Peter, James, and John have as to the experience that was to be theirs, as they trudged up that mountain. The indications are that the transfiguration occurred during the nighttime, for Luke speaks of their coming down the next day. (Luke 9: 37.) For some reason Jesus wanted to spend a season in prayer, with none present but Peter, James, and John; and he wanted these three to be present at his transfiguration. There was purpose in what he did. Being human as well as divine, he was perhaps depressed in spirit. Peter's confession, shared by the other disciples, had been encouraging; but his immediately rebuking Jesus for saying that he must go to Jerusalem and be killed had been very disappointing. His rebuke of Peter had been severe. The incident may have had an unfavorable effect on Peter; also on James and John, for they were also of the fiery temper. Jesus had brought the disciples away from the increasing turmoil and strife stirred up by the growing antagonism of the scribes and Pharisees, so that he might so thoroughly teach them that they would enter fully into his plans and purposes, but when he had told them of his approaching death—the main purpose of his coming into the world—they had rebelled at the thought. It was disappointing and depressing. Besides this depressing fact, the shadow of the cross, now growing darker each day, would add to the gloom and depression of the hour. Along these lines he must have prayed, for the answer to his prayer was such as to encourage him beyond words to express, and served also to have a fine effect on these fiery leaders of the apostles. "And he was transfigured before them." There had never before been anything like this; hence, there was no word in use that exactly told what occurred. Neither the Greek word here translated transfigured nor the English word transfigured fully expresses the change in the appearance of Jesus. It was therefore necessary to use other words

to describe the change that took place. Luke says, "The fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became white and dazzling." Matthew says, "And his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light." Mark says, "And his garments became glistening, exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them." The shining of his countenance was not a reflected light; neither was it a borrowed light. It was a light that shined from within—the glory of his Deity penetrating the veil of his flesh, giving his disciples a foreview of what he would be. No known process could make clothing so white as were his. How awe-inspiring must have been the sight to the three witnesses as they beheld his glorified appearance!

Moses and Elijah Appear (Verse 4)

"And there appeared unto them Elijah with Moses." Luke says they appeared in glory, that is, they appeared in their glorified state. Moses had died and been buried; Elijah had been translated without dying. Now both appear in glory. Moses stands with Jesus as the lawgiver to the Jews; Elijah, as their great prophet-reformer. It was perhaps through listening to the conversation between Jesus and these other-world visitors that the apostles learned who they were. From Luke we get this additional item: "And spake of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." And the apostles who thought Jesus must not die heard that conversation.

Peter's Proposal (Verses 5, 6)

Peter, always ready to speak out, said, "It is good for us to be here." That was true—it was good for all of them. Their prayers had been answered in a remarkable way, and they would be greatly strengthened for future service and trials. It was such a glorious experience that Peter would have liked to stay with it. So he proposed to Jesus: "Let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." We cannot blame Peter for wanting to prolong that experience, for most of us have been in company that was so delightful and uplifting, that, like Peter, we felt loath to leave it for the harder services of life. Tabernacles, or booths, such as the Jews made at the Feast of the Tabernacles, were made of the boughs of trees. Peter would build three tabernacles, thus paying equal honor to Moses, Elijah, and the Lord. This shows that he did not yet fully understand the divine nature of the Lord. To honor him equally with Moses and Elijah was to dishonor him, but Peter meant it not so. "For he knew not what to answer; for they became sore afraid." In his confusion he knew not what to say, and so he should have said nothing. But there was no need for tabernacles. Moses and Elijah were about to disappear, and Jesus would soon return with the three apostles to active service. With such an experience he could now return to the world of men, and again take up his work of ministering to the needs of suffering humanity. From Luke we learn that Peter suggested the three tabernacles as Moses and Elijah were parting from them.

"Hear Ye Him" (Verses 7, 8)

"And there came a cloud overshadowing them." From Matthew we learn that this cloud appeared while Peter was talking, and that it was a bright cloud. So it appears that Moses and Elijah disappeared in the bright cloud. And as Moses and Elijah disappeared a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son: hear ye him." The appearance of Moses and Elijah on that mountain was impressive and very significant; but their disappearing as the voice said, "This is my beloved Son: hear ye him," was even more so. All that went before in Moses and the prophets found their fulfilment in Jesus, and he was to supersede both of them as lawgiver and prophet. Moses had said, "Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." (Deut. 18: 15.) And so, while Jesus was standing before them in his glorified appearance, and Moses and Elijah were fading from their view, a voice from the Majestic Glory said, "Hear ye him." And that was the climax of the transfiguration scene, to which all the other incidents of the occasion led; and this is the main lesson for us to learn from the transfiguration. Only Jesus is left for us to hear. He is now our king. "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." (Col. 1: 18.) He has made his laws and regulations known through his chosen apostles. The fact, that when they looked around, after hearing the voice, saying, "Hear ye him," "they saw no one any more, save Jesus only with themselves," would remind them in an impressive way that Jesus alone remained to them as their lawgiver and prophet, and that to him alone they must hearken.

Secrecy Enjoined (Verses 9, 10)

They spent the night on the mountain, for Luke says they came down the next day. As they came down from the mountain, Jesus "charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, save when the Son of man should have risen again from the dead." To tell what they had seen might have either of two unpleasant results. Jesus would have their faith strengthened by what they had seen and heard, but he did not want their later testimony as witnesses of his resurrection impaired. Had they told what they had seen, many would not have believed them; and thus their testimony on any other point would have been weakened. And herein is a hint to us. Some people will not believe a thing that is out of the line of their own experience. To tell the unusual to people of that temperament causes them to regard you as "a windy." Most people who have seen much of the world have seen some unusual things, and some have injured their reputation for truth and veracity by injudicious telling of such things. So it is generally best not to tell the unusual things you have seen, though every word of your story be true. It would have been bad for these three apostles to gain a reputation for loose talking. Or, if the other disciples had believed what they said, they would naturally have felt that they had not been treated fairly in being left out of such a glorious experience. This would have been bad. The incidents of that night

were to be kept secret till Jesus arose from the dead. Then those who believed his resurrection would be prepared to believe his transfiguration, and also the appearance of Moses and Elijah. But these three did not know what Jesus meant by his statement that he would rise again from the dead. They would not be questioning among themselves as to what it meant for a person to be raised from the dead, for they had seen that done; they were questioning among themselves as to what he meant by his own resurrection. To us now it seems strange that the apostles were so slow to comprehend the oft-repeated statements of Jesus.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Materialists claim that a man does not have a spirit that survives the death of his body, and that there is therefore no personal existence between death and the resurrection. Now, the Bible clearly states that Moses died and was buried, and also that he appeared on the mountain and talked with Jesus. To offset the force of this, materialists put great stress on the word "vision" in Matthew's report. It is true that the word from which we have vision in Matthew's report sometimes means "a sight divinely granted in an ecstasy or in sleep," but its first meaning is, "that which is seen, a sight, spectacle." That the word in Matt. 17: 9 applies to things actually seen, and not to things appearing in a dream, seems, from the following considerations, not to admit of a doubt:

1. Matthew, Mark, and Luke say plainly that Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James, and John.

2. They say that Moses and Elijah were present and talked with Jesus about his coming death. These things are stated as facts, not dreams. Materialists deny the reality of these things, and would have us believe that Jesus carried on a conversation with men that existed only in his imagination, as if he were mentally unbalanced.

3. The apostles were not asleep—they were not dreaming. The inspired historian (Luke) says, "When they were fully awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him." This leaves no room for doubt.

4. While Matthew reports Jesus as saying, "Tell the vision to no man," Mark says, "He charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen." The vision, then, was not a dream, but what they had seen.

5. Peter speaks very definitely about the reality of that mountain experience: "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there was borne such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: and this voice we ourselves heard borne out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount." (2 Pet. 1: 16-18.)

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Moses.
Elijah.
The transfiguration.
The transforming power of the gospel.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
Discuss Mark 9: 1.

Verses 2, 3

Reconcile Mark's six days and Luke's eight.
On what other occasions did Jesus take Peter, James, and John with him?
Where did they go, and why?
In what way had the disciples been disappointing?
What happened to encourage him?
What is transfiguration?
Describe the appearance of Jesus.

Verse 4

Who appeared to them?
Name the outstanding characteristic of each.
About what did they speak?

Verses 5, 6

What did Peter propose?
What does his proposal show?
Why did Peter speak as he did?

Verses 7, 8

What occurred as Peter was speaking?
What did the voice from heaven say?
Give the significance of these words.
What similar statement had Moses made?
Discuss Paul's words in Col. 1: 18.

Verses 9, 10

What charge did Jesus give Peter, James, and John?
Why this charge?
What do you think of the habit of telling the unusual things one has seen?
Concerning what did the apostles question among themselves?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson V—May 1, 1938

FOLLOWING VISION WITH SERVICE

Mark 9: 14-29

14 And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great multitude about them, and scribes questioning with them.

15 And straightway all the multitude, when they saw him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him.

16 And he asked them, What question ye with them?

17 And one of the multitude answered him, Teacher, I brought unto thee my son, who hath a dumb spirit;

18 And wheresoever it taketh him, it dasheth him down: and he foameth, and grindeth his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast it out; and they were not able.

19 And he answereth them and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I bear with you? bring him unto me.

20 And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him grievously; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

21 And he asked his father, How long time is it since this hath come unto him? And he said, From a child.

22 And oft-times it hath cast him both into the fire and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us.

23 And Jesus said unto him, If thou canst! All things are possible to him that believeth.

24 Straightway the father of the child cried out, and said, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

25 And when Jesus saw that a multitude came running together, he

rebuked the unclean spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.

26 And having cried out, and torn him much, he came out: and the boy became as one dead; insomuch that the more part said, He is dead.

27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and raised him up; and he arose.

28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, *How is it that we could not cast it out?*

29 And he said unto them, This kind can come out by nothing, save by prayer.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*All things are possible to him that believeth.*” (Mark 9: 23.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 26: 19, 20; Rom. 12: 1, 2.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

April 25.	M.	Impotent Disciples (Mark 9: 14-19)
April 26.	T.	The Power of Jesus (Mark 9: 20-29)
April 27.	W.	Vision and Consecration (Isa. 6: 5-13)
April 28.	T.	Sending After Seeing (Acts 19: 3-8)
April 29.	F.	Heeding After Hearing (Ezek. 2: 1-7)
April 30.	S.	The Effect of Vision (Ezek. 12: 21-28)
May 1.	S.	Service After Vision (Acts 26: 12-20)

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 17: 14-20; Luke 9: 37-43.

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably the summer of A.D. 30.

Place.—Near the foot of the mount of transfiguration.

Persons.—Jesus, his disciples, the scribes, the demon-possessed boy and his father, and the multitude.

Lesson Links.—As Jesus and the three apostles were coming down from the mountain of transfiguration, he charged them to tell no man what things they had seen till the Son of man was risen from the dead. This started them to questioning among themselves as to what he meant by rising from the dead. For some reason they did not ask Jesus what he meant. They asked him another question, hoping, perhaps, that in answering that question he would give them some idea as to what he meant by rising from the dead. “How is it that the scribes say that Elijah must first come?” The scribes, no doubt, based their statement on what Jehovah had said through the prophet Malachi: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. 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.” (Mal. 4: 5, 6.) In announcing to Zacharias that a son would be born to him, the angel said, “And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him.” (Luke 1: 17.) John the Baptist was not Elijah in person, but, coming in the spirit and power of Elijah, he was the Elijah that was to come. Hence Jesus said, in answer to the question propounded by the three apostles, “Elijah indeed cometh first, and restoreth all things: and how is it written of the Son of man, that he should suffer many things and be set at nought? But I say unto you, that Elijah is come, and they have also done unto him whatsoever they would, even as

it is written of him." In reporting this conversation Matthew adds this additional item: "Then understood the disciples that he spake unto them of John the Baptist." (Matt. 17: 13.)

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Multitude (Verses 14, 15)

It was humanly impossible for Jesus to escape the multitudes for any length of time. This multitude had gathered about the nine apostles and perhaps some other disciples, whom Jesus had left behind when he, with Peter, James, and John, went up into the mountain the day before. There were also scribes present, and evidently there for no good. It seems that the scribes and Pharisees had made up their minds to harass Jesus at every step. They had become his implacable enemies. In the absence of Jesus they were engaged in controversy with his disciples. Of course they could raise questions and make arguments that the disciples could not then answer; but that fact did not prove that they were right and the disciples wrong. A cause sometimes suffers in controversy, not because it is wrong, but because of the weakness of its defender. Just why the multitude was amazed when they saw Jesus coming is not clear. It must have been that some of the effects of his transfiguration remained with him. When Moses returned from communing with the Lord on Mount Sinai, "the skin of his face shone by reason of his speaking with him," so much so that Aaron and the children of Israel were afraid of him.

The Disciples Fail to Cast Out a Demon (Verses 16-18)

Jesus asked what the controversy was about. One of the multitude proceeded to explain to him the trouble, "I brought unto thee my son, who hath a dumb spirit; and wheresoever it taketh him, it dasheth him down: and he foameth, and grindeth his teeth, and pineth away." Any one who has seen a person have a severe epileptic fit can have a fair idea as to what happened to this man's son when the evil spirit seized him. It is a horrible sight. This man had heard that Jesus was in the community, and had brought his afflicted son, that Jesus might heal him; but he evidently arrived while Jesus was up in the mountain. In the absence of Jesus, the man had asked the apostles to cast out the evil spirit, but they were not able to do so. In sending them out on their first and limited commission, Jesus had given them power to cast out demons, and they did cast them out. (Mark 6: 7, 13.) But in this case they had failed, and, of course, felt greatly humiliated over their failure. To add to their discomfort and humiliation, the scribes were present to embarrass them before the multitude. In the fact of their failure it would be easy for the scribes to ask them questions that they could not answer. They had claimed the power to cast out demons, had tried to do so, and had failed before the entire multitude; what could they say? We can be sure that the scribes were making the most of their failure, and were showing the apostles up in a great way. All of which shows that a person who is in the wrong may

sometimes gain a temporary advantage. But the triumph of the scribes was cut short by the entrance of Jesus on the scene.

"Bring Him Unto Me" (Verse 19)

"O faithless generation." This is a general accusation, and, of course, included the disciples. The evil spirit was more powerful than their faith. There is also a rebuke in the questions Jesus asked: "How long shall I be with you? how long shall I bear with you?" He would soon go away from the earth, and leave his work to be carried on by his followers. Would they have faith enough to succeed, or would they fail, as had the disciples on this occasion? If Jesus did not bear with our weak faith, we would all perish. "Bring him unto me." Jesus was the only hope; he alone could help this man's afflicted son. And even now he is our only hope. He alone can remove all our troubles; he alone can save. But faith on our part is required, faith that is strong enough to lead us to give ourselves wholly into his guidance.

Jesus Questions the Father (Verses 20-22a)

When the man's son was brought to Jesus, "straightway the spirit tare him grievously." For "tare" the marginal reading has "convulsed." The circumstances indicated that convulsed is the preferable word. He had a severe convulsion; "and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming." It was a horrible sight. The evil spirit, as if realizing that he was soon to be cast out, took this last opportunity to torment his helpless victim. Jesus asked the father, "How long time is it since this hath come unto him?" Two or three things could be accomplished by having the father answer this question. He could get the man's mind off the failure the disciples had made; the multitude would learn from the answer that this was a case of long standing. They would learn that it was not mere temporary fits, which had been brought on by overeating, or by some temporary ailment, and which would soon pass away. They could therefore see that curing the boy was a very great miracle. The question and answer would also serve to center the attention of the multitude on what he was about to do. The son had been afflicted with the evil spirit "from a child." The case in our lesson had been demon-possessed "from a child." Certainly his wickedness had not been the cause of his being so early possessed of a demon. And then we read also of the Syrophenician woman, "whose little daughter had an unclean spirit." (Mark 7: 25, 26.) Certainly this little daughter could not have been so unclean in her habits as to be the cause of having this unclean spirit. The fact is, we know not what condition brought about demon possession, but we do know that it was not caused by the wickedness of the person. Besides, there is no indication that demon possession made the person more wicked; it seems rather to have caused bodily or mental troubles. In this case the victim was dumb, and often had severe convulsions. "And oft-times it hath cast him both into the fire and into the waters, to destroy him." His life was in constant danger. He was therefore a great care and a constant source of anxiety to his parents. We can have very little idea as to how much he suffered.

"If Thou Canst!" (Verses 22b-24)

The man was not sure that Jesus could do anything for his son. The failure of the disciples and the criticisms of the scribes may have almost destroyed the faith that led him to bring his son to be cured; so he said, "If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." There is not much faith back of that expression. There seems to be a degree of sarcasm, or else disgust in the reply Jesus made, "If thou canst!" Had the man known who Jesus was, he would never have expressed doubt as to what Jesus could do, but he did not know. Ignorance says many things that knowledge would be ashamed of. "All things are possible to him that believeth." This seems to refer to the need of faith on the part of the man. It does not mean that any man can do anything that he thinks he can do, but that it was possible for Jesus to help any one who believed. That is the sense in which the man took the words of Jesus, as is seen in his reply: "Straightway the father of the child cried out, and said, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." It was a prayer for the Lord to help him to overcome whatever degree of unbelief that stood in the way of his receiving the blessings which he so much desired. Perhaps uncertainties and doubts mixed with our faith often stand in the way of our receiving many of the Lord's blessings.

The Evil Spirit Cast Out (Verses 25-27)

Not all of the multitude had at first gathered around Jesus and the demon-possessed child. Now they come rushing to see what was happening. Perhaps some were really interested in the man and his afflicted son; but there is enough curiosity in most people to lead them to go places where they have no other interest than to see what is going on. It seems that Jesus was not interested in gratifying the curiosity of these people; for when he saw the multitudes running to him, he commanded the evil spirit to come out of the child and to enter no more into him. For once the evil spirit in the child spoke, using, of course, the child's vocal organs. The evil spirit was evidently giving expression to his rage at being cast out of the child. The child had another terrific convulsion, as the evil spirit came out. He became as one dead, so much so that the majority said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him up. After seeing all these things, no one could doubt but that a great miracle had been wrought. In the face of such demonstration of power, the criticisms and jeers of the scribes counted for nothing.

Why the Disciples Failed (Verses 28, 29)

Having performed the miracle Jesus went into a house, leaving the multitude to arrive at their own conclusions concerning him and the miracle. But the disciples still felt the sting of their failure. If a person fails in a laudable attempt, he can profit by his failure, if he learns why he failed. This is the road to improvement. It is to the credit of these disciples that they did not lay the blame on the presence of the scoffing scribes; and yet their question was broad enough to cover any possible cause for the failure. "How is it that we could not cast it out?" Questions like that always demand a straight-

forward answer. When men know that the questioner is in the wrong, they sometimes give an evasive answer, or else try to make it appear that the questioner is not altogether to blame. They try to save his feelings instead of trying to save him from wrong. Such a course is neither honest nor kind. Jesus gave the information the disciples sought. "This kind can come out by nothing, save by prayer." They had left God out—they had depended on their own powers. And why? In Matthew's report of this conversation we have this additional item in the answer Jesus gave: "Because of your little faith." They needed more faith in God, and less in themselves.

SOME REFLECTIONS

No man could by his own power perform miracles. When it appeared that a man was working miracles, it was really God doing it through him.

To become self-centered, as did the disciples, is to lose power to do good. A self-centered person's faith in God is weak, for his faith is mostly in himself. Even now the Christian, in converting sinners and edifying saints, must rely upon God's power and wisdom instead of his own. God's power to save is the gospel.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

John the Baptist as Elijah.

Demons.

Faith and prayer.

How we may save people.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
After the transfiguration, what did Jesus command the apostles?
What question did they ask him?
Give the reply.
What proof that John the Baptist was the promised Elijah?

Verses 14, 15

On returning to the other disciples, what did Jesus find?
What was the attitude of the scribes toward Jesus?
What of the people when they saw Jesus?

Verses 16-18

What did Jesus ask?
Who replied, and what did he say?
Show that the apostles formerly had power to cast out demons.
What use would the scribes likely make of their failure?

Verse 19

Repeat what Jesus said.
What did he command?

Verses 20-22a

What occurred when the son was brought?
What did Jesus ask?
What was the answer?
What did demons usually do to people?

Verses 22b-24

What plea did the father make?
How does it show a lack of faith?
How did Jesus reply?
What then did the man say?

Verses 25-27

What did Jesus command the evil spirit?
What then happened?

Verses 28, 29

What did the disciples ask Jesus?
Give his reply.
Give Matthew's additional item.
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VI—May 8, 1938

COOPERATING IN SERVICE

Mark 9: 30-41

30 And they went forth from thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it.

31 For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered up into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he shall rise again.

32 But they understood not the saying, and were afraid to ask him.

33 And they came to Capernaum: and when he was in the house he asked them, What were ye reasoning on the way?

34 But they held their peace: for they had disputed one with another on the way, who was the greatest.

35 And he sat down, and called the twelve; and he saith unto them, If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all.

36 And he took a little child, and set him in the midst of them; and taking him in his arms, he said unto them,

37 Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

38 John said unto him, Teacher, we saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followed not us.

39 But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man who shall do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me.

40 For he that is not against us is for us.

41 For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, because ye are Christ's, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“For he that is not against us is for us.” (Mark 9: 40.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Cor. 3: 5-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

May 2. M.	.....	The Childlike Spirit (Mark 9: 30-37)
May 3. T.	.....	Humility in Working Together (Mark 9: 38-44)
May 4. W.	.....	Narrowness Rebuked (Mark 9: 45-50)
May 5. T.	.....	Cooperation Meeting Opposition (Neh. 4: 15-23)
May 6. F.	.....	Waiting Together (Acts 1: 10-14)
May 7. S.	.....	Worshipping Together (Heb. 10: 19-25)
May 8. S.	.....	To Every Man His Part (1 Cor. 3: 5-11)

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 18: 1-5; Luke 9: 46-50.

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably autumn A.D. 30.

Place.—Capernaum.

Persons.—Jesus, the twelve apostles, a little child, and another disciple of Jesus of whom we know nothing, save what is revealed in the lesson text.

Lesson Links.—So far as the record shows this lesson follows immediately after the events of our last lesson. There were some things that Jesus did not speak in plain terms when his avowed enemies were present. They made a practice of distorting any truth which they heard. For that reason, much of his public teaching was done in parables, especially after the scribes and Pharisees became so hostile toward him. Even the multitudes, who were more or less friendly to him, were not prepared for certain teaching. For these reasons he taught his disciples many things when they were away from the multitudes. He spoke to his disciples of his coming suffer-

ings, death, and resurrection. They needed to be prepared, insofar as forewarning would prepare them, for the coming events. They would have experiences that would try men's soul. There was no need to tell the multitudes these things.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Jesus Again in Galilee (Verses 30-32)

"They went forth from thence." Jesus and his disciples had spent some time in the regions of Cesarea Philippi. In going down to Capernaum, they would pass through the northern part of Galilee. He did not want it known that he was again in Galilee. In this way he would escape being so annoyed by the scribes and Pharisees, nor would he be so pressed by the surging multitudes. He had taught enough and performed enough miracles in Galilee to lead all honest hearts to believe. Again Jesus announces to his disciples his death and resurrection. Putting Luke's and Mark's report together we have: "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of man is delivered up into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he shall rise again." He here speaks of being delivered up as if it had already taken place. When an event is certain it is sometimes spoken of as if it had already occurred. The Jewish authorities, by the aid of Judas Iscariot, would deliver him into the hands of the Romans, who would kill him; but his resurrection was as certain as his death. And still the disciples did not understand him. Such things did not belong in the program they had mapped out, and they did not understand anything that did not fit into their program of things. When men make out a program for the working out of God's plans, nothing he says to the contrary makes any impression on them. The only safe course is to let the Lord make his own plans, and then be willing for him to use us as he desires in working out his plans.

Wrong Ambition Rebuked (Verses 33-35)

Jesus and his disciples are back in Capernaum after their journey up into the regions of Cesarea Philippi. After all that Jesus had taught them, and after he had refused to allow the Jews to make him a king, the disciples still looked for a temporal kingdom in which there would be places of honor and power for those who were faithful to him. They had that all planned out, but they could not agree among themselves as to who would have the highest places of honor. That was one part of the program that they could not agree on. They were much like politicians of today. It is a sad fact that such ambitions for places of honor are sometimes found in the church even in these days. "There is an appearance of discrepancy here between Matthew and Mark. Matthew represents the disciples as beginning the conversation by asking who would be greatest, while Mark introduces it by saying that Jesus asked them, 'What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?' We take both reports as true, and each as elliptical. As Matthew states, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' (Matt. 18: 1.) They asked this with an air of innocent inquiry, giving no intimation of the dispute in which they had en-

gaged. Jesus begins his reply by asking them, "What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?" showing that he knew the cause and the occasion of their inquiry. Confused and conscience-smitten, "they held their peace."—*McGarvey*. There is a difference between being counted the greatest and being the greatest. A Christian has his heart set on the wrong thing when he wants to be counted great in the eyes of men. To the Pharisees who loved to be considered great, Jesus said, "Ye are they that justify yourselves in the sight of men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God." (Luke 16: 15.) To seek the glory of men utterly unfits one for being a true believer in Christ. "How can ye believe, who receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?" (John 5: 44.) "If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ." (Gal. 1: 10.) But in reality the greatest servant is the greatest person. The disciples had not yet learned that lesson. "And he sat down, and called the twelve; and he saith unto them, If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all." Humility, and a willingness to serve wherever one can be of most use, no matter how lowly the service may be, is real greatness. The self-centered, the personal-advantage seeker, has no place in God's kingdom.

The Child in the Midst (Verses 36, 37)

Jesus would give these ambitious disciples of his an object lesson. He would give them an example of what they at heart should be. "And he took a little child, and set him in the midst of them." Matthew says he called to him a little child. The child was old enough to come at his bidding. Luke says he set the child by his side. He then put his arms around the child. According to Matthew Jesus first said, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18: 3, 4.) We are not to be like little children in everything. Paul says, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things." (1 Cor. 13: 11.) "Brethren, be not children in mind: yet in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men." (1 Cor. 14: 20.) Children are free from worldly ambition. This is the point Jesus was emphasizing, for that was the lesson the apostles needed at that time. To be great in the sight of God one must be humble. The apostles' ambition for places of honor unfitted them for the positions they desired. Not only is humility essential to useful service in the kingdom of heaven, it is an essential qualification for entrance into the kingdom. We must therefore become free from worldly ambition—free from ambition that seeks the best place at the expense of some one else; "in honor preferring one another," "doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself." (Phil. 2: 3.) When several brethren are engaged in a mad scramble for the same place, as frequently occurs these days, it shows how far, how very far, we have fallen short of the ideal set before us by our Lord

and Master. In verse thirty-seven, Jesus turns his speech from the little child to the one who becomes as a little child—"one of such little children." That this is the correct idea is shown by Matthew who represents Jesus as speaking of "one of these little ones that believe on me." This language therefore shows that he was not talking about our receiving babes in the name of Christ, but such believers as become humble and unworldly like little children. To receive the humblest believer in Christ is to receive Christ. "And whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me." The proud heart that will not receive the lowliest of the disciples of Christ, by that refusal rejects Christ. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me." (Matt. 25: 40.) "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me." (Matt. 25: 45.) Yet the average Christian shows a preference for the person who makes a pretense of being important. That was true even in the days of the apostles. (See James 2: 1-4.)

"We Forbade Him, Because He Followed Not Us" (Verses 38-41)

The apostles would not feel very comfortable over the rebuke Jesus had given them. Their learning that he knew of their dispute would be mortifying. It seems that John sought to relieve the situation somewhat by diverting attention to another person. It would also relieve their feelings somewhat, if they could get Jesus to join with them in criticizing some one who was not present. That is human nature. John and some of the others had met up with a man who had not pleased them. "Teacher, we saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followed not us." This man was not of another religion. He was performing his works in the name of Christ. The fact that he could cast out demons should have been proof to John and the others that God was with him. They should have concluded, that, inasmuch as God was pleased with him, they should bid him Godspeed; but they bade him to cease his casting out demons, because he would not follow them. That is, he would not join the group of personal followers of Christ, and go along with them in their journeys. And John reported that as an offense. He thought the man should be stopped. But instead of gaining any relief for their own feelings by directing criticism toward one not present, John's effort brought upon them another rebuke. "Forbid him not." The man was a follower of Christ, even if he did not choose to be a member of the group that accompanied with Jesus. He could not do mighty works in the name of Christ and speak lightly of him. He respected the authority of Christ, else he could have done nothing in his name. At some time Jesus had, unknown to the other disciples, given this man power to cast out demons. He certainly could not have cast them out had not such powers been given him. The man was not against Jesus nor his disciples. So far as the record shows, his teaching and his work were exactly like that performed by the twelve when Jesus sent them out on their first mission. He was therefore on their side. The apostles therefore should not have made any attempt to dis-

courage him. He was evidently a true disciple of Christ, and doing what he could in the name of Christ to relieve the suffering. The incident has nothing to do with the question as to whether a Christian should encourage those who are seeking to build up parties in religion, and who belittle the authority of Christ by teaching their own doctrines, and by speaking lightly of some of the commands of Christ. The Bible is clear on what should be our attitude toward those who are not true to the Lord and his teaching. Especially are we to guard against those who build up parties in religion. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent." (Rom. 16: 17, 18.) No one should place a construction on Jesus' reply to John, that would contradict Paul's language to the Roman brethren. In forbidding the man to cast out demons because he would not go with them, John and the others were acting without any authority.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Long habits of thought are hard to overcome. The disciples of Christ shared the common Jewish idea that their Messiah would be a mighty conqueror, surpassing the warriors of all time. That the Messiah would be put to death as a common felon was not so much as thought of. For that reason they did not know what Jesus meant when he talked about his coming death.

Jesus was the greatest of all teachers, yet in many things the disciples were slow in understanding him. This should admonish us to be patient with those who do not understand us. Many of our hearers have been long drilled in sectarian ideas and practices, and have never known anything else. Let us patiently teach those who show a willingness to learn.

Ambition for worldly glory has no place in the Christian's character. Diotrephes of old loved to have the preeminence. (3 John 9.) There are many like him. These are such as show respect of persons for the sake of advantage. (Jude 16.) There is not much lowliness of mind, not much of the spirit of Christ manifested, when numbers of Christians are struggling to outdo each other in gaining some coveted position. If you were ever a candidate against a brother for any place, did you stop to think how impossible it was for you to square your conduct with the teaching of Christ? Did each one in that race count the other better than himself?

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Why the disciples were so slow to understand Christ.

How some lessons are needed to prepare for others.

What is humility?

The evils of worldly ambition.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
What course did Jesus pursue in teaching?

Verses 30-32

Where had Jesus spent some time with his disciples?
From that point, through what country did he pass?
What did he not want known?
Why this secrecy?
What did he again repeat to his disciples?
Who would deliver him up, and who kill him?
Why did the disciples not understand him?
What possible harm in mapping out programs for the Lord?

Verses 33-35

What sort of kingdom did the disciples expect?
About what could they not agree?
To what did that lead?
How did the matter come up before Jesus?
Name some evils of seeking worldly glory?
Prove that a man cannot be a

servant of Christ while seeking to please men.
What is humility?

Verses 36, 37

What object lesson did Jesus give?
What did Jesus say?
In what are we not to be like a little child?
In what ways are we to be like a little child?
What must be our attitude toward other brethren?
Discuss this point.
What is said about our attitude toward the lowliest, or least, disciple?
How do we often violate this teaching?

Verses 38-41

How does it seem that John sought to divert attention to another?
What shows that this man was a true disciple?
What was John's complaint?
Quote the reply Jesus made.
What shows that the man was not acting without authority?
Show that the incident has nothing to do with our attitude toward sectarians.
Comment on Paul's language in Rom. 16: 17, 18.
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VII—May 15, 1938

TESTING DISCIPLESHIP BY SERVICE

Mark 10: 17-31

17 And as he was going forth into the way, there ran one to him, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good save one, even God.

19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor thy father and mother.

20 And he said unto him, Teacher, all these things have I observed from my youth.

21 And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

22 But his countenance fell at the saying, and he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions.

23 And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

24 And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

25 It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

26 And they were astonished exceedingly, saying unto him, Then who can be saved?

27 Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for all things are possible with God.

28 Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.
 29 Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for my sake, and for the gospel's sake,

30 But he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

31 But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Come, follow me.” (Mark 10: 21.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 15: 8-16.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

May 9.	M.	Failing to Stand the Test (Mark 10: 17-22)
May 10.	T.	How to Stand the Test (Mark 10: 23-31)
May 11.	W.	Standing the Test (Job 42: 10-17)
May 12.	T.	Faithful Servants (Matt. 25: 14-23)
May 13.	F.	Unfaithful Servants (Matt. 25: 24-30)
May 14.	S.	The Question of Stewardship (Luke 16: 1-10)
May 15.	S.	The Test of Fruit Bearing (John 15: 8-16)

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 19: 16-30; Luke 18: 18-30.

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—According to Usher, A.D. 30; according to Hales, A.D. 31. The latter date seems the more probable.

Place.—Perea.

Persons.—Jesus, a rich young man, and the disciples.

Lesson Links.—In our last lesson Jesus was at Capernaum. Now he is on his way to Jerusalem. To avoid going through Samaria to Jerusalem, the Jews of Galilee crossed the Jordan below the Sea of Galilee, went down through Perea on the east side of the Jordan, and recrossed the Jordan east of Jericho. In going that way Jesus would have opportunity to teach the crowds that were on their way to Jerusalem. When he stopped at a house along the way, he again encountered the Pharisees. They asked him if it was lawful for a man to put away his wife, seeking to entrap him in his talk. Before answering, he asked them, “What did Moses command you?” They replied that Moses allowed them to write a bill of divorcement. That, Jesus told them, was because of their hardness of heart. It was a provision to protect the woman from the cruelties of a hard-hearted husband who wanted to get rid of her. But in the beginning God had made a male and a female, each for the other. Marriage was intended to be a permanent union between a man and a woman, and it would have continued so, had it not been for the sins of one or both parties.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

A Young Man's Great Question (Verse 17)

As Jesus was leaving the house where he had stopped, “going forth into the way,” or road, “there ran one to him.” From Matthew we learn that he was a young man, and from Luke, that he was a ruler. Notice that the record says that he ran. Perhaps he had just learned that Jesus was in the community, and came to present his question. Seeing Jesus already starting on his journey, he ran to overtake him. That he ran to Jesus shows great interest and

intense purpose. Being a man of wealth and of a fine character, he would, of course, have a standing in that community that meant much to him. And he knew that he would be misunderstood and criticized for going to Jesus with an earnest desire for information, when all the other leaders were against Jesus. But that did not deter him—he ran openly and unafraid to Jesus. At first glance we see much to admire in this rich young ruler. He kneeled before Jesus, showing that he regarded Jesus as his superior. His kneeling also showed his respect for Jesus as a teacher. “Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” The only source of information he had concerning eternal life was what we now term the Old Testament, and eternal life is not very prominently set forth in that portion of the scriptures. Yet we are not to infer that the Old Testament worthies were ignorant of a life after death. They looked for a city whose builder and maker is God, and they desired a heavenly country. (Heb. 11: 10, 16.) And Job said, “And after my skin, even this body, is destroyed, then without my flesh shall I see God.” (Job 19: 26.) Leeser’s translation has, “. . . freed from my body shall I behold God.” And Daniel says that some shall awake to eternal life. (Dan. 12: 2.) Our young man knew of eternal life, and desired very much to inherit it. The young ruler knew that eternal life was an inheritance, that nothing he could do would merit it, or bring it to him as a debt God owed him for service; but he knew also that he had to do something in order to become an heir to eternal life. Jesus did not contradict that idea, but told him plainly what to do. One of the most hurtful theories ever taught is the doctrine that a person can do nothing to inherit eternal life. It is plainly declared that Jesus, through suffering, “became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation.” (Heb. 5: 8, 9.)

Jesus Tells the Young Ruler What to Do (Verses 18, 19)

The young man had addressed Jesus as “Good Teacher.” “And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good save one, even God.” No human being is absolutely good; only God is that. Jesus was therefore reminding the young man that in calling him good he was really recognizing his Deity. He was God manifest in the flesh. Then Jesus proceeds more directly to answer his question. “Thou knowest the commandments.” Or as Matthew reports Jesus as saying, “If thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments.” That was what he had to do to inherit eternal life. According to Matthew he asked which commandment he must keep. Jesus replied, “Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor thy father and mother.” The command, “Do not defraud,” is not one of the ten commandments, unless Jesus meant it as a condensing of the tenth. Matthew’s report contains one which is not in the ten commandments, namely, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Jesus mentions the commands that have to do with man’s relation to man, on the grounds, perhaps, that the average religious person is more likely to neglect these than the others.

Jesus Loved and Tested Him (Verses 20, 21)

"Teacher, all these things have I observed from my youth." He had been carefully taught, and had kept himself under excellent discipline. We have no reason to doubt his sincerity and truthfulness. He had been upright in his relations with others. "And Jesus looking upon him loved him." He loved him in a special and personal way, not as he loved all men. He loved him because of what he saw in him. That was a wonderful tribute to the young man. But how much did the young man love Jesus? The young man himself would not know till he was put to the test. If his love would stand the test, if he loved Jesus more than all things else, and if he desired heavenly treasures more than he desired earthly treasures Jesus would bless him in the highest degree. Notwithstanding his faithful observance of the law of Moses, the young man felt that there was still something he lacked; otherwise he would not have come to the Great Teacher for information. "One thing thou lackest." His real love for the Lord had not yet been put to the test. "Sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." Instead of thinking so much about what Jesus required, he should have thought more about what he offered. His riches, though great, were small in comparison with the inexhaustible riches of eternal life. "And come, follow me." Jesus wanted such an excellent young man in the company of his personal followers. His energy, integrity, and ability would have gone far had he, like Paul, been willing to say, "Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ." (Phil. 3: 7, 8.) But had the young man gained no distinction by giving up all and following Christ, he would have done much good to his fellow man, and would have gained the riches of the eternal world.

Riches Were Dearer to Him than Eternal Life (Verse 22)

"His countenance fell at the saying, and he went away sorrowful." He had come to the parting of the ways, and he took the wrong road. He would not pay the price; riches were dearer to him than eternal life, though he very much desired eternal life. "He went away sorrowful." He was not equal to the test. Men have been tested by other things than money. God tested Abraham when he commanded him to offer up Isaac. When God saw that Abraham would not falter, he stayed his hand. It might have been so in this case, had the young man promptly agreed to sell all he had and give to the poor. On that point it is useless to speculate.

The Danger of Riches (Verses 23-27)

No doubt Jesus was sorrowful, as was the young man. "And Jesus looked round about" him. He would scan the faces of his disciples to see how the incident affected them. The young man was intellectual, energetic, clean in life, a businessman, and very much interested—a very promising prospect; yet Jesus had driven

him away, so it would seem to the average disciple. "What a calamity!" some of today would say, and they would feel that Jesus lacked tact, and that he could not interest the young folks. Would those disciples feel the same way about it? On a former occasion some of the disciples had objected to his demands, and had quit him. (John 6: 20-68.) To emphasize the danger of riches, Jesus said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" It was an amazing statement, for few people ever lived that did not at some time wish to be rich. In reply to their amazement, Jesus addressed his disciples as "children." "Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!" This gives the key to the whole matter. Trusting in his riches was the young man's trouble. It is certain that riches had not robbed him of his interest in religion, nor made a bad man of him; and yet they had not fully satisfied the longing of his soul. Jesus offered him that which would satisfy his soul. His conduct is rather puzzling. When offered that which would satisfy his longings, he rejected it, and held on to that which had never satisfied! After all, he trusted his riches more than he did the Lord. "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." This proverb presented no difficulties to the people to whom Jesus was speaking, but it has been a source of much trouble to the commentators. All sorts of absurd explanations have been given. It will help you to understand it, if you will imagine yourself as one of his hearers, and used to their methods of speech. They were used to exaggerated proverbs; all the orientals were. Jesus used them. Consider this: "Ye blind guides, that strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel!" (Matt. 23: 24.) To understand the Lord we must consider the meaning he attached to the term riches. In that conversation, the rich man was the man who trusted in his riches. So long as one trusts in his riches, he cannot be saved. A very poor man may belong to this class. The wage earner may trust in his pay check, however meager it may be. The disciples understood that the language of Jesus applied to all, for they asked, "Then who can be saved?" They thought the language would cut everybody off, whether they be rich or poor, for it seemed that about everybody trusted in riches. If so, then who can be saved? "With men it is impossible, but not with God: for all things are possible with God." No man has ever been able to originate a moral philosophy, nor a system of social service, nor a religion, that will wean men away from loving and trusting riches, and cause them to trust unreservedly in God. Only God could do that. Through the unselfish service of his Son, both in his life and in his death, God can and does lead men to love and trust him instead of riches. We come to trust one who suffered so much for us. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself. But this he said, signifying by what manner of death he should die." (John 12: 32, 33.) Jesus was speaking of his death on the cross. That death would cause men to become unselfish, and draw them to Christ.

The Reward Here and Hereafter (Verses 28-31)

Peter and the other apostles had left all to follow Christ. Matthew reports Peter as saying, "What then shall we have?" Jesus replied

that those who had left all for his sake and the gospel's sake would receive a hundredfold now in this present time, and in the world to come eternal life. This great sacrifice must be made for his sake and for the gospel's sake; no reward is promised for a sacrifice made for any other reason. And the reward promised is for this life, as well as for the life to come. In its connection with this lesson, it is hard to see the force of the proverb of verse thirty-one. In Matthew's account the parable of the man hiring laborers for his vineyard is given to show its application, in that the first that were employed were the last to be paid; but even so, the student may find it difficult to see how that will work out in the world to come. But no matter; we will understand it then. In the meantime we can trust God instead of riches.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Riches within themselves are not an evil; but one often becomes a slave to wealth, and that is evil. Riches may so absorb the thoughts and energies of even a good man that he has no time for anything else. Such a man is a slave to wealth. Wealth is a cruel and exacting master; but can be made a very useful servant. A man cannot serve God and mammon.

A desire to be rich leads to many evils. "But they that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition." (1 Tim. 6: 9.)

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Wealth as a master and as a servant.
The dangers of seeking to become rich.
The New Testament teaching on giving.
The liberality of the Jerusalem church.
Is eternal life conditional?

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
Toward what city was Jesus traveling?
Which road was he traveling?
What controversy did he have with the Pharisees?
What was the original marriage law?
Why were there exceptions made?

Verse 17

Discuss the character of the young man.
What question did he ask?
Where might he have learned something of eternal life from the Old Testament scriptures?
May eternal life be an inheritance, and yet conditional?

Verses 18, 19

What was implied in calling Jesus good?
What did Jesus tell the young man?
What was the nature of the commands Jesus mentioned?

Verses 20, 21

What reply did the young man make?
What was the attitude of Jesus toward him?
How did Jesus test the young man?
What did Jesus offer him?
How did he fail to measure up with Paul?

Verse 22

What effect did the words of Jesus have on the rich man?
Does any one know how much he loves the Lord till he is tested?
By what other means besides money may men be tested?

Verses 23-27

What would the average disciple today think of driving away such a man?

With what words did Jesus emphasize the danger of riches?

What effect did his words have on the disciples?

What words show his real meaning?

What is singular about the young man's conduct?

Verses 28-31

What did Peter say?

What reply did Jesus make?

For whom and what must the sacrifice be made?

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VIII—May 22, 1938

SERVING THROUGH CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP

Mark 12: 13-17, 28-34

13 And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, that they might catch him in talk.

14 And when they were come, they say unto him, Teacher, we know that thou art true, and carest not for any one; for thou regardest not the person of men, but of a truth teachest the way of God: Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?

15 Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why make ye trial of me? bring me a denarius, that I may see it.

16 And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's.

17 And Jesus said unto them, Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's. And they marvelled greatly at him.

28 And one of the scribes came, and heard them questioning together, and knowing that he had answered them well, asked him, What commandment is the first of all?

29 Jesus answered, The first is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God, the Lord is one:

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.

31 The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

32 And the scribe said unto him, Of a truth, Teacher, thou hast well said that he is one; and there is none other but he:

33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is much more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.

34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."* (Mark 12: 31.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 13: 1-7.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

May 16.	M.....	Earthly Loyalties (Mark 12: 13-17)
May 17.	T.....	Heavenly Loyalties (Mark 12: 28-34)
May 18.	W.....	Citizens of Two Worlds (John 17: 13-19)
May 19.	T.....	Duties of Citizens (1 Pet. 2: 13-25)
May 20.	F.....	God the Founder of Governments (Dan. 2: 17-24)
May 21.	S.....	Duties to Rulers (Rom. 13: 1-7)
May 22.	S.....	The Christian Citizen (Psalm 15: 1-5)

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 22: 15-46; Luke 20: 19-44.

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—According to Usher, A.D. 30; according to Hales, A.D. 31. It was on Tuesday of the crucifixion week. Jesus came to Bethany six days before the Passover. (John 12: 1.) It appears that he spent the Sabbath at Bethany, and then made what is known as his Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem on Sunday. He spent his nights at Bethany. On the next day, Monday, he cleansed the temple. The events of our lesson occurred on the next day, Tuesday.

Place.—Jerusalem.

Persons.—Jesus, the Pharisees, Herodians, and a scribe, or lawyer.

Lesson Links.—In our last lesson Jesus was in Perea, east of the Jordan, on his way to Jerusalem. He would cross the Jordan east of Jericho. At Jericho he gave sight to a blind man, and was entertained in the home of Zaccheus. His enemies in Jerusalem were becoming more and more determined against him, and, on the probability that he might come to the feast, they gave commandment that any one knowing where Jesus was should report it, "that they might take him." (John 11: 57.) This appears to have been a court order. But on his entry into Jerusalem such a vast multitude met him and returned with him to the city with such a noisy demonstration that the Pharisees became so discouraged over the prospects that they said among themselves, "Behold how ye prevail nothing; lo, the world is gone after him." But when Jesus cleansed the temple it so enraged them that they renewed their determination to kill him, but could not find any way to get him away from the admiring multitudes. (Mark 11: 18; Luke 19: 47, 48.) Then the parable of the wicked husbandman further enraged them, for they could see plainly that the parable was aimed directly at them. "And they sought to lay hold on him; and they feared the multitude; for they perceived that he spake the parable against them: and they left him, and went away." (Mark 12: 12.) They went away to do more plotting as to what to do.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

A Committee Sent to Question Jesus (Verses 13, 14)

"And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, that they might catch him in talk." Matthew informs us that the Pharisees held a council, and sent to him their disciples with the Herodians. Their disciples were young men whom they had in training. Perhaps they thought Jesus would not be suspicious of the young men, and would talk to them more freely than to these old seasoned enemies. Luke says, "They watched him, and sent forth spies, who feigned themselves to be righteous, that they might take hold of his speech, so as to deliver him up to the rule and to the authority of the governor." If they could catch him in some treasonable talk, they would report him to the Roman governor, and he would have him arrested by his soldiers, and they would not have to bother any more about how to get hold of him. But little is known of the Herodians, but it appears that they were more of a political party than a religious sect. It is said that they were partisans of the Herods, and wanted to get the Herod line of kings back, but tributary to the Romans as formerly, so that they would be under the direct rule of one of the Herods, instead of under a foreign

governor appointed by the Emperor. The greater part of the Pharisees were bitterly opposed to the Herodians, but political scheming can easily bury enmity for an emergency. Both parties together might the more easily catch Jesus in his talk, so they thought. Here were some men that very much needed to be taught by Jesus, but did not know it. The only interest they had in talking to the greatest teacher the world has ever known was to entrap him in his talk. They were like some Bible readers of today, who read the Bible only to see if they can find something in it to criticize. On this occasion the enemies of Jesus tried new tactics. Instead of coming to him bristling for a fight, they pretend to be righteous and very desirous of having him settle a disputed question, the Pharisees representing one side and the Herodians the other.

The Question.—"Teacher, we know that thou art true, and carest not for any one." They came to him with the most complimentary speech they could think up; they meant that he did not care for the rank or the class of any one, for they immediately added, "For thou regardest not the person of men." Had they been sincere their speech would have been true and right, but on their hypocritical lips it was a lie—they meant not a word they said. By their flattering speech they thought to wheedle him into coming out strongly on one side or the other of their much disputed question. "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?" By lawful, they meant "according to the law of Moses." Although the Jews had for many years been under the Roman government, many of them had never become reconciled to paying the taxes required by Caesar. The Herodians would, of course, favor paying the Roman taxes. Both sides were represented in this committee; it had been deliberately so arranged. If he said, "It is lawful to give tribute to Caesar," he would turn many of his friends against him, for many of them were much opposed to paying the Roman taxes. If he said, "It is not lawful," then he would be charged with treason against Caesar. In their mind they had him in a dilemma from which there was no way of escape. They had never concocted a shrewder scheme to get Jesus into trouble. We condemn their motives, but must admire their shrewdness.

Jesus Easily Escapes Their Dilemma (Verses 15-17)

But they did not deceive Jesus by their flattering speech; he knew their hypocrisy. "Why make ye trial of me?" As Matthew reports: "Why make ye trial of me, ye hypocrites?" They saw at once that they had not deceived him as to their motives in coming to him. They may have resented his bluntly calling them hypocrites, but they knew that it was true. "Bring me a denarius, that I may see it." The denarius was a Roman coin worth about seventeen cents, and was then the pay for a day's labor. According to Matthew Jesus said, "Show me the tribute money." Having examined the denarius, Jesus asked, "Whose is this image and superscription?" The denarius bore the image of the Emperor under whose reign it was coined, together with his title in abbreviated words. The question of Jesus implied, "Who issued this coin? Whose is it?" He would have them commit themselves; they replied, "Caesar's." Without realizing it, they had got themselves into a dilemma. They had Caesar's

money, and were using it in their business transactions; would they return it when Caesar called for it? Jesus so advised: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." They used Caesar's money; they had also Caesar's protection from murder and robbery and other forms of lawlessness, and they used the roads he built. To accept the services of Caesar and not bear their part of the expense would be dishonest. Neither should a Christian now avoid paying his taxes. "And unto God the things that are God's." As the coin bore the image of Caesar, so we bear the image of God. If we are Christians, we bear his name also; and so the Christian bears his image, and, so to speak, his superscription. Give Caesar his coin—it belongs to him; give yourselves to God—you belong to him. The ease with which Jesus escaped the trap so carefully set for him amazed his inquisitors. Some of the Jews thought they could not be faithful to God and pay taxes to a foreign government. To all such, the alternative was, "Shall we obey God, or shall we obey Caesar?" But Jesus showed them that they confronted no such difficulty—that there was no such alternative. It was not, "Obey God or Caesar"; but, "Obey God and Caesar." It is the duty of everybody to obey the laws of the country in which he lives, so long as they do not interfere with his duties to God. "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well." (1 Pet. 2: 13, 14.)

What Commandment Is First of All? (Verse 28)

The Sadducees, who were materialists, came to Jesus with what they must have considered their unanswerable argument, but Jesus had answered them with ease. This pleased the scribes and Pharisees. Matthew says, "But the Pharisees, when they heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, gathered themselves together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, trying him." Mark calls him a scribe. A lawyer was not an attorney, but one skilled in the law, a scribe. He asked Jesus which commandment was first of all, that is, which was the first in importance. They could not dispute his miracles, and they could not meet him in argument; and now they would try to test his knowledge of the law. As he had had no special training in the law under their great teachers, they felt that one of their trained lawyers might be able to "show him up."

Jesus Answers the Lawyer's Question (Verses 29-31)

In answering the lawyer's question Jesus quotes first the words with which Moses prefaced the great commandment. (Deut. 6: 4, 5.) The first is, "Hear, O Israel." This was the exhortation of Moses to Israel to give attention to this great commandment which he was about to deliver. He then introduces the authority back of the commandment: "The Lord our God, the Lord is one." He is supreme, the one God of the universe. Other nations had many gods, but the Lord our God is one. So Moses calls on Israel to hear what the director of all things says: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Heart, soul, mind, strength—that comprehends

all there is in man. Heart and mind are sometimes used interchangeably, but heart distinguished from the mind, as in this place, would mean the emotions—affections, reverence, fear, etc., and the mind would refer to the intellectual powers. We are to love with our intelligence as well as with our emotions. Emotional religion without intelligence leads to superstition; for superstition is ignorant reverence, just as intelligence without reverence is rationalism. The word soul is hard to define; it sometimes refers to the individual, and sometimes it seems to refer to the spirit. We are to give God our strength, both physical and moral. The second is this, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Self-love is inherent; it leads a person to look out for his own good. To love the neighbor as one loves himself leads to an effort to do good to the neighbor. Such love makes a man a useful citizen, a helpful neighbor. "There is none other commandment greater than these." Matthew adds, "On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets." If a man loves God wholly and supremely, he will do everything God commands. "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." (John 14: 15.) And if a man loves his neighbor as himself, he will not defraud his neighbor, nor steal from him, nor bear false witness against him, nor covet what he has, but will treat him right, and be merciful and forbearing toward him. If a man love God and his neighbor, he will discharge every duty both to God and to his neighbor; and so these two commands include all other commands, and for that reason are the greatest.

"Thou Hast Well Said" (Verses 32-34)

For one time a Pharisee was pleased with what Jesus said. To love God and the neighbor, as Jesus had said, "is much more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices." When the Jews ceased to love God, their sacrifices were an abomination to him. Without love, praise is mockery, and worship is hypocrisy. Jesus was much pleased with this Pharisee, and said to him, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." He had a right understanding of man's relation to God and to his fellow man. He likely made mistakes in trying to follow out these principles, but a person had better make a thousand mistakes in trying to do God's will to the utmost of his ability than to set his will and way up against God's will at any point. However ignorant a man may be, if he is hungering and thirsting for righteousness, if he wants to know and to do the will of God, he is not far from the kingdom. "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word." (Isa. 66: 2.) But to be not far from the kingdom is to be yet outside the kingdom. A drowning man may be within reach of safety, and yet perish. Only a step from the kingdom, and yet perish!

SOME REFLECTIONS

A Christian should be the best citizen in his community.

Whether a law suits the Christian or not, he must obey it, provided it does not require him to do wrong. He must not disobey a law on the plea that it interferes with personal rights.

There is no such thing as disobedient love. A person who really

loves God does not speak lightly of any of God's commands. For a person to set aside one of God's commands because it does not suit him is to become a law unto himself, and that is anarchy.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The difference between Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees.

Jesus as a debater.

The first great commandment.

The second great commandment.

The Christian as a citizen.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give some points as to time.
Give place and persons.
Give some historic facts leading up to this lesson.
What of the enemies of Jesus in Jerusalem?
What appears to have somewhat discouraged them?
What other things enraged them more?

Verses 13, 14

Who came to question Jesus, and why?
What does Luke say of these men?
What did these men say to Jesus?
What was their question?
Why did they think their question would entrap him?

Verses 15-17

What did Jesus call these men?
Describe how he turned the tables on them.
Why were they under obligations to pay taxes?
What do we owe to God?

How far must we obey the laws of our country?
Repeat Peter's injunction.

Verse 28

What was the doctrine of the Sadducees?
What problem had they presented to Jesus?
What answer did Jesus give?
What did the Pharisees then do?
What object did they have in sending one to Jesus?
In the New Testament, to whom does the word lawyer apply?
What question did the lawyer ask Jesus?

Verses 29-31

Give the answer Jesus gave the lawyer.
Let different members of the class discuss each item in Jesus' reply.
Tell how much we must love God, and to what it leads.
Tell how much we must love our neighbor, and to what it leads.

Verses 32-34

What did the lawyer say about the answer Jesus made?
Who is not far from the kingdom?
Is being near the kingdom sufficient?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IX—May 29, 1938

MAINTAINING PERSONAL EFFICIENCY

Dan. 1: 8-16, 19, 20; 1 Cor. 9: 24-27

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.

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.

24 Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run; that ye may attain.

25 And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

26 I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air:

27 But I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things."* (1 Cor. 9: 25.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—2 Pet. 1: 5-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

May 23.	M.	Physical Efficiency (Dan. 1: 8-16)
May 24.	T.	Mental Excellence (Dan. 1: 17-21)
May 25.	W.	Spiritual Mastery (1 Cor. 9: 24-27)
May 26.	T.	Self-Control and Service (Rom. 13: 8-14)
May 27.	F.	The New Life Standard (1 Pet. 4: 1-11)
May 28.	S.	Self-Denial for Others (1 Cor. 8: 1-13)
May 29.	S.	Temperance and Personal Efficiency (2 Pet. 1: 5-11)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Dan. 1: 8-16, about 600 B.C.; First Corinthians, A.D. 56.

Places.—The incidents recorded in the book of Daniel occurred in Babylon. The First Corinthian letter was written at Ephesus.

Persons.—Daniel and his companions, the prince of the eunuchs, the steward who fed Daniel and his companions, Paul and the church at Corinth.

Lesson Links.—The great city of Babylon was the capital city of the mighty Babylonian Empire. Nebuchadnezzar, the greatest of its kings, had conquered the Jews, and had brought them away from Jerusalem and Judea, and had scattered them through other parts of his empire. He then commanded Ashpenaz, the prince of his eunuchs, to bring in the most promising of the seed royal of the children of Israel to be trained for service about the royal palace. "And the king appointed for them a daily portion of the king's dainties, and of the wine which he drank, and that they should be nourished three years; that at the end thereof they should stand before the king. Now among these were, of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah." At the end of the three years the most intelligent and the finest looking were to become the

king's personal servants. The king, of course, had for his own use the finest food and wine that could be obtained. He thought his rich food and fine wines would be the very thing to give these prospective servants plenty of energy and make them look healthy and well-fed. He also wanted them to have the very best of mental training. His pride would require that his personal servants be both intelligent and fine looking. The outcome of the training shows how little the king knew about the kind of foods and drink that was good for the human system. Rich food and strong drink do not develop strong men.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Daniel's Request (Verse 8)

The law of Moses designated some animals, fishes, birds, and insects as unclean. The Jews were not allowed to eat these. (Lev. 11.) Neither were they allowed to eat blood. The Babylonians knew nothing about these distinctions and prohibitions; nor would they have paid any attention to them had they known. Some of these prohibited foods would be almost certain to be a part of the king's food. Daniel therefore purposed in his heart not to eat any of the king's dainties; to do so would defile him—make him both unclean and sinful. Neither would he drink of the king's wine. Though the officials in Jerusalem had become very corrupt, and though Daniel was of the royal family, he, in some way, had learned the evils of drinking intoxicants. It is likely that, being a youth of good understanding, he had been impressed by Jeremiah's teaching and heroic example, for Jeremiah did all he could to save his people from the corruption which led to their captivity. Daniel was certainly acquainted with Jeremiah's efforts. He respected the law of God. "Therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself." Ashpenaz was the prince of the eunuchs. (Verse 3.) He had charge of all the servants of the royal palace.

Ashpenaz Declines Daniel's Request (Verses 9, 10)

Through the overruling providence of God, Daniel found favor with the prince of the eunuchs. Daniel was a captive, and was therefore entirely in the hands of his captors. To them, he and his companions were just so much property to be used as those in authority saw fit, but Daniel's good sense and exemplary conduct raised him above the ordinary captive, and gained him favor with those who had him in charge. But the chief of the eunuchs, though he felt very favorable toward Daniel, was afraid to grant his request. The king had made a certain order, and the prince of the eunuchs knew that the king would not hesitate to take off his head if he failed to carry out the king's orders. He felt sure that Daniel and his companions would grow lean and have a haggard appearance if they did not eat the rich food from the king's table; and he knew that when the king examined them, he would inquire into the cause of their leanness. In that event, he could see nothing but death before him. He would not therefore yield to Daniel's request. To him, of course, Daniel's request sounded foolish. Why would any man refuse to eat the best food and drink the finest wine that

could be found in the world? He would not endanger his life to humor such a cranky notion!

Daniel's Plea to the Steward (Verses 11-13)

It seems that the prince of the eunuchs had charge of all the affairs about the palace. He, of course, had his affairs organized with a headman for each department. The steward was the chief of the culinary department. He would have direct charge of feeding those who were in training. Having failed in his plea to the prince of the eunuchs, Daniel now discreetly appealed to the steward. He begged that he and his companions be allowed to eat pulse for a ten-days test, instead of the king's dainties. That was a vegetable diet. In this way he would not be eating any of the meats prohibited by the law of Moses; neither would he be drinking wine. At the end of the ten days the steward was to examine them, and decide for himself as to their food thereafter. Daniel had no doubts as to the result of the test aside from his religious convictions. Daniel knew that indulgence in rich food and wine did not produce a fair complexion and bodily vigor. No doubt that his observations among the royal personages in Jerusalem had given him a fair idea as to the results of intemperate eating and drinking. A wise person can learn much from the experiences of others.

The Test Satisfies the Steward (Verses 14-20)

The steward complied with the request of Daniel and his three companions, and put them on a vegetable diet for ten days. But as their preparation was to cover a period of three years, he knew that ten days out for an experiment would not affect the final showing. He was running no special risk, unless word of the experiment leaked out; and the five men directly concerned in the matter would see that no word was whispered to others as to what was going on, for there was so much at stake on the part of all of them as to induce the greatest secrecy. No such experiment had ever before been tried out among the royal attendants at the royal palace in Babylon. "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." The other youths, not being used to such rich food and fine wine, if allowed to do so, would indulge more heavily at the first than was good for them. This would show on them, even if their food and drink had been the thing they needed. But the test settled the matter with the steward. Daniel and his companions were right. "So the steward took away their dainties, and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse." So Daniel and his three companions, by being true to their convictions, fared better than did the others. "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. 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. 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." (Verses 18-20.)

The Grecian Games—An Illustration (1 Cor. 9: 24-27)

Illustrations.—Jesus used many illustrations in the form of parables. In these parables he dealt with things with which his hearers were acquainted. Many of his parables were taken from farming and grape growing. As the Jews had little to do with public games, Jesus used no games as illustrations. With Paul it was different. The Greeks delighted in their games. The Isthmian games were held near Corinth. Besides other forms of sport, they had running and boxing. At the games they had judges. They also had a herald, whose duty it was to announce the rules, the prizes, the contestants, and also the winners. In this section of our lesson Paul uses two forms of sport as illustrations.

The Race.—In the Grecian games, no matter how many ran in the race, only one received the prize. No matter how diligently a person prepared for the race, nor how much effort he put forth in the race, he got nothing but disappointment and humiliation if another beat him to the goal. But it is not so in the Christian's race. If you take and maintain the lead over the flesh and the devil, you gain the prize, no matter how many others do the same. The flesh will beat you, if you allow it to dominate you; the devil will beat you down, if you let him do so. Hence, Paul says: "Even so run; that ye may attain." The only uncertainty as to the outcome of the race lies with the runner himself. The race is not to the swift, but to the one who makes diligent effort. The one who decided to be a contestant in any of these games put himself under a trainer, who regulated his eating, exercise, and sleeping. For the Olympic games this training lasted ten months. Any self-denial that was thought necessary was made. In his training the contestant exercised self-control in all things. Perhaps few Christians have their hearts as fully set on winning as had the contenders in these Grecian games. After his rigid training there were rules that he had to observe when he entered the contest. If he did not observe these rules, he lost out, no matter how good a showing he made. "And if also a man contend in the games, he is not crowned, except he have contended lawfully." (2 Tim. 2: 5.) Here Paul applies that principle to the Christian life. As in the games, so in the Christian life, there are rules to govern the contestants. We must strive lawfully, or else we forfeit the crown, no matter how hard we strive according to our self-imposed rules.

The Prize.—"Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible." It is said that the crown for the victor in the Olympian games was made of wild olive leaves; in the Pythian games, of parsley; and in the Isthmian games, of pine. All these crowns would soon perish. Of course, the crown stood for all the honors and advantages that went with it; but these, as well as the crown, soon perished. The crown the Christian gains stands for all the blessings that go with his eternal inheritance—a priceless and incorruptible inheritance. How diligently therefore should the Christian strive to obtain that crown that fadeth not away. Perhaps no other man was ever more determined to win the race than was Paul. "I therefore so run, as not uncertainly." In the Grecian games, if a man did his best, he was not certain as to the outcome.

But in the Christian race, if a man runs faithfully, he runs not uncertainly.

Boxing.—"So fight I, as not beating the air." Macknight translates thus: "So box I, as not beating the air." Thus Paul continues his lesson from the games, but changes from running to boxing. In this boxing, he was making every punch count; he was hitting where he aimed, and not merely striking into the air, as boxers sometimes do. He was in a boxing contest with his body. "I buffet my body." The word from which we have buffet originally meant "to hit under the eye"—"to give one a black eye"; then "to beat one black and blue." In the boxing game it meant "to give one the knockout blow." Paul had given his body the knockout blow, and he was keeping it in subjection, lest, after preaching to others, he should fail to be approved. Paul, as a preacher, as a herald, announced the rules of the Christian life and the prize for the victors. The fact that Paul was so diligently exerting himself to keep from being rejected, and thus fail of the prize, shows conclusively that a saved man may become so negligent as to be finally lost. If so excellent a servant of God as was Paul might be rejected, certainly any other one might fail.

SOME REFLECTIONS

The Jewish nation fell a victim to the armies of Nebuchadnezzar because of its internal corruption. Like a dead tree, it finally became too rotten to stand. Read the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of Second Kings, also the last chapter of Second Chronicles. There were some good people among the Jews who were carried away into Babylonian captivity. It often happens that the innocent and the righteous suffer because of the wicked. A drunken or reckless driver may smash into the most careful of drivers, crippling or killing the innocent.

The argument was made that to legalize the selling of liquors would promote temperance. Perhaps some were sincere in making that claim; but no one can claim that the extensive advertising of liquors that is now going on in the newspapers and magazines promotes temperance. The great volume of such advertising is a manifest effort to increase the consumption of intoxicating drinks. If the "wets" are sincere in their claims that they wish to promote temperance, why is not some effort made to stop the advertising of intoxicants?

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

- Why the Jews were carried into captivity.
- The Grecian games.
- The Christian race.
- The Christian fight.
- The evils of intoxicating drinks.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings
How come Daniel and other Jews in Babylon?

What order did Nebuchadnezzar give to the prince of his eunuchs? What was his object?

Verse 8

What distinction did the law of Moses make in animals, birds, fishes and creeping things? Why would Daniel be opposed to eating the king's dainties? Why not drink wine? What request did Daniel make?

Verses 9, 10

What is said of Daniel's standing with the prince of the eunuchs? Why did Ashpenaz deny Daniel's request? What would a heathen think of Daniel's request?

Verses 11-13

How would the prince of the eunuchs manage the affairs of which he was the head? Who had charge of feeding the youths? What proposition did Daniel make to him?

Verses 14-20

What resulted from Daniel's proposition? Discuss the whole proceedings.

1 Cor. 9: 24-27

From what sources did Jesus draw his illustrations?

Why were Paul's illustrations different?

Tell about the Grecian games.

How many prizes in each contest?

In this particular, how does the Christian race differ?

Over what must the Christian triumph?

Where does uncertainty lie?

How did contestants prepare for the games?

Why are Christians not as diligent?

How did contestants regard the rules?

What lesson does that teach us?

What was their prize?

What is ours?

What does Paul say of boxing?

He was in a boxing contest with what?

What does he mean by "not beating the air"?

What success did he have?

Why did he strive so hard?

What possibility does his language show?

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson X—June 5, 1938

SERVING BY PERSONAL DEVOTION TO CHRIST

Mark 14: 3-11, 27-31

3 And while he was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster cruse of ointment of pure nard very costly; and she brake the cruse, and poured it over his head.

4 But there were some that had indignation among themselves, saying, To what purpose hath this waste of the ointment been made?

5 For this ointment might have been sold for above three hundred shillings, and given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

6 But Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.

7 For ye have the poor always with you, and whensoever ye will ye can do them good: but me ye have not always.

8 She hath done what she could; she hath anointed my body beforehand for the burying.

9 And verily I say unto you, Whosoever the gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

10 And Judas Iscariot, he that was one of the twelve, went away unto the chief priests, that he might deliver him unto them.

11 And they, when they heard it, were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently deliver him unto them.

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.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"She hath done what she could."* (Mark 14: 8.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 116: 1, 2, 6, 7, 12-14.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

May 30.	M.....	Mary's Gift of Love (Mark 14: 3-11)
May 31.	T.....	Peter's Boast (Mark 14: 27-31)
June 1.	W.....	Zeal Born of Love (Phil. 2: 12-18)
June 2.	T.....	Love Shown in Deeds (1 John 3: 16-19)
June 3.	F.....	A Prayer of Love (Eph. 3: 14-21)
June 4.	S.....	Love to Christ Preeminent (Matt. 10: 32-39)
June 5.	S.....	A Song of Devotion (Psalm 116: 1-14)

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 26: 6-16, 31-35; Luke 22: 3-6; John 12: 1-8.

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—The crucifixion week, A.D. 31. The feast at Simon's house may have been on Wednesday, for it seems that Jesus did not go into Jerusalem on Wednesday. The conversation recorded in verses 27-31 occurred on the way to Mount Olivet, only a short time before Jesus was made a prisoner.

Places.—Bethany, and on the way to the Mount of Olives.

Persons.—Jesus, his disciples, Simon the leper, and the woman who anointed Jesus.

Lesson Links.—Lesson eight left Jesus teaching in the temple. That was evidently on Tuesday. As he and his disciples left the temple that day, his disciples, with pardonable pride, said, "Teacher, behold, what manner of stones and what manner of buildings!" Jesus replied, "Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left here one stone upon another, which shall not be thrown down." The destruction would be complete. The temple would be destroyed, together with Jerusalem and the nation of the Jews. On their way to Bethany, where they would spend the night, they stopped for a while on the Mount of Olives. The temple was in plain sight. Peter, James, John, and Andrew, with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple still in mind, asked Jesus two questions: "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when these things are all about to be accomplished?" The remaining part of the thirteenth chapter contains answers to these questions, together with some warnings to the disciples as to what to do in that crisis. Before the destruction of the temple there would be wars and rumors of wars; "but the end is not yet." That is, the end of the nation and the temple. These calamities would be only the beginning of the end of their nation and the temple. He also warned them to flee from Jerusalem when they saw certain signs. He did not tell them the exact date these things would occur, but did say, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, until all these things be accomplished." Many then living were still alive when, in A.D. 70, the temple was destroyed, a million Jews perished, and the rest were carried away as slaves. That they might watch for the signs of this coming destruction, Jesus exhorted, "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is."

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Jesus Anointed at the House of Simon (Verse 3)

Matt. 26: 6-13, Mark 14: 3-9, and John 12: 2-8 tell of a feast at Bethany. Some commentators think John describes one feast; well-known fact that none of the writers made any effort to record indicates that the feast was made when Jesus arrived at Bethany, and before his triumphal entry. One thing should be noticed, and that is, that John condenses the events of the week up to the night of the betrayal much more than do Matthew and Mark. It is a well-known fact that none of the writers made any effort to record everything in its historic order. There are certain facts that indicate that John records this feast out of its historic order. Up to two days before the feast the authorities in Jerusalem were still worrying about how they might get hold of Jesus. They had decided that they would wait till after the feast, which would last a full week. (Mark 14: 1, 2.) This was certainly before Judas contracted with them to deliver Jesus into their hands; for after that trade with Judas they would not need to worry about how they might seize him. And it seems certain also that Judas went to them from the feast at Simon's house. Judas evidently became peeved at the rebuke Jesus gave him about the ointment. After telling about the feast, Matthew says, "Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests. . . ." A man called Simon the leper made this feast for Jesus. It was natural for Simon to invite his neighbors, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus to his feast, especially since they were the special friends of Jesus, for whom he made the feast. It is certain that Simon had recovered from his leprosy; otherwise he would not have been allowed to associate with people. (See Lev. 13: 45, 46.) It is most likely that Jesus had cured him of his leprosy, and he made this feast for him as an expression of his gratitude. He was still called Simon the leper, perhaps as a means of identifying him, for there were many Simons among the Jews. "Martha served." That was characteristic of her; nor is it strange that she served in the home of a neighbor. As Lazarus had but lately been raised from the dead, special mention would be made of him. Mary, the thoughtful, devoted Mary, had "an alabaster cruse of ointment of pure nard very costly; and she brake the cruse, and poured it over his head." John says there was a pound of this ointment, and that it was very precious. There was no selfish motive on the part of Mary in thus anointing the head of Jesus with this costly ointment. She thought there was nothing too good, or costly, to bestow on her Lord. She did not mean to be wasteful, nor does her act of devotion warrant us to spend money for display or to gratify our pride.

Some Indignant at "This Waste" (Verses 4, 5)

While it appears that some of the disciples had been fairly prosperous, it is not likely that any of them were so prosperous but that they had always felt the need of strict economy. To them, as it should be to every one, wastefulness was wrong. They, of course, had a fair idea of the costliness of the ointment. To the more economical, it seemed that to pour it all out on one person

served no useful purpose. They were indignant. Why this waste? It might have been sold and given to the poor. We are told that it was worth several dollars. It appears that Judas took the lead in this criticism; and some of the others agreed with him without thinking to question his motives. Of Judas John says, "Now this he said, not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and having the bag took away what was put therein." So often base motives are covered up by a pretended zeal for righteousness.

Jesus Makes Reply (Verses 6-9)

"But Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me." She, of course, was greatly disturbed at being denounced for performing an unselfish act of devotion for the Lord. To her it was a sad time, and out of the fullness of her heart she had given Jesus the best she had, and yet she was criticized before the others for doing so. But Jesus reassured her by rebuking her critics and praising her deed. It will be noticed that Jesus did not tell the group that Judas was merely wanting to get the price of the ointment in his own hands. The others likely would have thought he was too severe on Judas. He would say nothing about Judas' motive; Judas would soon reveal himself. Judas had had the poor about him all along; what had he done for them? And there would still be opportunities to help the poor, for there would always be poor people. Yet there are Utopian dreamers who look forward to a day when there will be no poor people. They are mistaken; "for ye have the poor always with you." Why bother Mary if she does bestow a costly gift upon her Lord? Had he not bestowed a priceless gift upon her in giving back from the dead her brother Lazarus; and was not he himself soon to be killed? It appears that Mary had a better understanding of these things than did the apostles. When Jesus had told them of his coming death and resurrection, they were so determined that it should not be, and were so full of ambition for high places in his kingdom, that his speech had little effect on them. But not so with Mary. She had not been blinded by any selfish ambition, and she knew she could do nothing to avert his death. But she could make one last sacrifice for him. "She hath done what she could; she hath anointed my body beforehand for the burying." And what she did has been told, and is told, and will yet be told, wherever the gospel is preached.

Judas Bargains with the Chief Priests (Verses 10, 11)

A selfish man like Judas would not like to be rebuked, nor would he like to be thwarted in his desire to get his hands on some money. He was evidently peeved. Besides, it is likely that Jesus seemed to him to be too impractical and sentimental to ever be a successful king. And Jesus had said that he was to be killed, and that Mary had anointed his body for the burying. Altogether he was in a frame of mind that prepared him to do a base deed. He decided to go to the chief priests to see what he could do for a little profit. "What are ye willing to give me, and I will deliver him unto you?" They gave him thirty pieces of silver, an amount equal to fifteen dollars, a small amount for so base a deed. The authorities were

glad. Men have fallen low in hatred when they are glad to find a base traitor who will help them put an innocent person to death; but that is what a party spirit in religion will do for people. Neither they nor Judas knew they were fulfilling prophecy. "So they weighed for my hire thirty pieces of silver." The authorities did not worry any more about how to get Jesus into their hands in the absence of the multitude; Judas had assured them that he would perform that task. And so he sought how he might conveniently deliver him unto them.

The Scattering of the Disciples Foretold (Verses 27, 28)

The night of the betrayal had come, Jesus and his disciples had eaten the Passover, and the Lord's Supper had been instituted. And Judas, knowing where Jesus would go after he had finished his speech to the disciples, had gone to lead a band to the place that they might seize Jesus in the darkness of the night, and in the absence of the multitude. Now Jesus and the eleven were on their way to the garden of Gethsemane. At the supper he had made the startling announcement that one of them would betray him; now he astonishes them again by saying, "All ye shall be offended." The marginal reading has, "Greek, caused to stumble." Matthew reports Jesus as saying, "All ye shall be offended in me this night." And the nature of their stumbling was shown by the prophecy which Jesus quoted: "For it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad." The time for this to be done was short, for the night then must have been half gone. But he assures them, that though he was smitten, he would rise again. He then made an appointment for a meeting in Galilee after his resurrection. From Matt. 28: 16 we learn that Jesus had designated a certain mountain for the place of meeting; and of course he had also named a date, else they would not have known when to go to the mountain.

Peter's Denial Foretold (Verses 29-31)

On different occasions, the disciples manifested a weakness that is all too common among professed followers of Christ. Perhaps they did not recognize it, yet they occasionally assumed to be wiser than their Lord. When Jesus first plainly announced that he would be killed in Jerusalem, Peter said that it should never be. When Mary anointed his head, some of them seemed to think they knew better than Jesus as to what should have been done with the ointment; otherwise they would have waited to see what he said about it. Now Jesus informs them that they would all be scattered. But Peter affirmed that it was not true in his own case, even if all the others did stumble. But Jesus made it even stronger in Peter's case. "Verily I say unto thee, that thou to-day, even this night, before the cock crow twice, shalt deny me thrice." But Peter was not convinced; he still thought he knew more about himself and what he would do than the Lord did. "But he spake exceeding vehemently, If I must die with thee, I will not deny thee." But Peter was not alone in putting his knowledge up against the Lord's. "And in like manner also said they all." But not many of us are in position to criticize them, for we often put what we think up against what the Lord says. Their example should also warn us not to be overly

positive as to what we would do under certain circumstances. "If I were in his place, I would do thus and so." You merely think you would; you might, like Peter, do even worse than the other fellow.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Social gatherings where things are carried on right are not wrong. They may even be helpful. Certainly Jesus would not have attended a feast had they been wrong in principle.

The conduct of the chief priests and Pharisees shows how determined sinful and selfish men are to put out of the way any one whose life and teaching interfere with their program of things. If they are religious fanatics, such men are so much the worse.

It has been said, even from the pulpit, that we have a selfish motive in everything we do. Can you believe it? Can you not call to mind many things, even hazardous things, that people have done wherein they could have had no selfish motive? Certainly you can find no selfish motive in what Mary did.

Judas sold his Lord, yes; but in doing so, he sold himself to do evil. It was said of Ahab that he "did sell himself to do that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah." (1 Kings 21: 20, 25.) It is also said that the children of Israel sold themselves to do evil. (2 Kings 17: 17.)

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Social affairs—their uses and abuses.
Evils of assuming to be wiser than God.
How men sell themselves to do evil.
The evils of overconfidence.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
Where did the events of last lesson occur?
To what did the disciples call the Lord's attention?
What reply did he make?
On Mount Olivet what questions did Jesus answer?
Name some signs by which they could know that the end of their nation was near.
What warning did Jesus give the disciples?

Verse 3

Who made a feast for Jesus?
What writers record this feast?
When was the feast?
Who was at the feast?
Who served?
Tell about the anointing.

Verses 4, 5

What did some of the disciples think of the anointing?

Who seems to have led in the criticism and why?

Verses 6-9

What did Jesus say to the critics?
Discuss the reply Jesus made.

Verses 10, 11

Discuss Judas and his bargain with the chief priests.

Verses 27, 28

Give some of the incidents between the two parts of our lesson.
What startling announcement did Jesus make?
Give meaning of offended.
What prophecy did Jesus quote?
What appointment did he make?

Verses 29-31

How had the disciples showed that they thought Jesus did not know what he was talking about?
What did Jesus say Peter would do?
What did Peter think about that?
Was he alone in what he said?
Why is it not wise to be positive as to what we would do under certain circumstances?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XI—June 12, 1938

FACING THE SUPREME TEST OF SERVICE

Mark 14: 32-46

32 And they come unto a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I pray.

33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly amazed, and sore troubled.

34 And he saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death: abide ye here, and watch.

35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass away from him.

36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; remove this cup from me: howbeit not what I will, but what thou wilt.

37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst thou not watch one hour?

38 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

39 And again he went away, and prayed, saying the same words.

40 And again he came, and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they knew not what to answer him.

41 And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough; the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

42 Arise, let us be going; behold, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

43 And straightway, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

44 Now he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he; take him, and lead him away safely.

45 And when he was come, straightway he came to him, and saith, Rabbi; and kissed him.

46 And they laid hands on him, and took him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Not what I will, but what thou wilt."* (Mark 14: 36.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 42: 6-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

June 6.	M.	.....	The Test of Sorrow (Mark 14: 32-42)
June 7.	T.	.....	The Test of Betrayal (Mark 14: 43-50)
June 8.	W.	.....	From Affliction to Glory (Heb. 2: 5-12)
June 9.	T.	.....	Enduring the Cross (Heb. 5: 1-10)
June 10.	F.	.....	Power in Submission (Gen. 32: 24-32)
June 11.	S.	.....	The Ministry of Pain (Heb. 12: 9-13)
June 12.	S.	.....	A Cry of Distress (Psalm 42: 6-11)

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 26: 36-50; Luke 22: 40-53; John 18: 1-11.

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 31. It is likely that the Jews began their sacred year with the first new moon after the spring equinox. Their months were lunar. Hence, to keep their year in proper balance, they frequently added a month at the end of the year. If the exact year in which Jesus was crucified was definitely known, the time for the first new moon after the vernal equinox of that year could be figured out. We could therefore know the exact date of the betrayal of Jesus. Figuring on such matters may be interesting, but not profitable.

Place.—The garden of Gethsemane. That garden was likely larger then than the small enclosure now called Gethsemane.

Persons.—Jesus, his disciples, Judas, and the mob which seized Jesus.

Lesson Links.—This lesson follows immediately after the events of our last lesson.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Garden of Gethsemane (Verse 32)

"And they come unto a place which was named Gethsemane." Gethsemane means a place of oil presses. At this time it was a garden, but retained its name. John says, "When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Kidron, where was a garden, into which he entered, himself and his disciples." From Luke 22: 39 and John 18: 2 we learn that Jesus often resorted thither with his disciples. It had been a pleasant place to rest, and to quietly converse with his disciples. It appears to have been open to the public, a sort of pleasure garden, or park; but we now think of it as the Garden of Sorrow and of Resignation. "Gethsemane has not come down to us as a scene of mirth; its inexhaustible associations are the offspring of a single event—the agony of the Son of God on the evening preceding his passion."—*Smith*. Every time the name Gethsemane comes to the mind of the Christian there springs up in his heart a sad, sweet feeling that nothing else can produce. Having entered the garden Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit ye here, while I pray." The awful hour of the cross was drawing near. Soon he would be in the hands of his cruel and unreasoning enemies, and his beloved disciples would be scattered. The people whom he came to save would soon be a raging mob, clamoring for his blood, and the hopes of his disciples whom he had so patiently trained would be crushed. The only comfort he could have in an hour like that would be found in secret communion with his Father. There comes to every one times when prayer is the only refuge for the burdened soul. There is awe-inspiring sublimity in the scene when a great being like Jesus finds in prayer his only refuge. "Blessed hour of prayer."

Jesus Selects Peter, James, and John to Be Near Him (Verses 33, 34)

Though Jesus had told his disciples to sit here, while he prayed, he selected out of the group Peter, James, and John to go with him that they might be near him while he prayed. "Began to be greatly amazed, and sore troubled." We cannot fathom the mystery of the humanity and Deity in Jesus; he hungered, thirsted, became weary, and rested in sleep, as do human beings. It seems that the horrors of the cross would therefore be dreaded by his human nature, as it would by any other human being. We should not therefore be surprised that Jesus was sore troubled. He knew, as no one else could know, what was before him. He was soon to pass through a mock trial before the high court of his own people, and then be delivered into the hands of the Romans, who would crucify him amid the taunts and jeers of his own people. Yet he had come into the world to do good to all, and evil to none. "He was despised, and rejected

of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." (Isa. 53: 3.) It seems that there has never been another time in which the world was so full of hate—the Jews hated the Romans and the Romans hated the Jews, and both united in hating Jesus, and would later be as one in their hatred of his church. It is no wonder therefore that he said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." He felt as if he could not survive the pressure that was upon his soul, and the utter helplessness into which he had sunk is seen in the request to the chosen three. "Tarry ye here, and watch with me!" "He who had been their comforter in every hour of trouble and danger, now calls on them for the help which their wakeful sympathy would give him in the hour of his agony. Wonderful sight! The Son of God longing for the sympathy of human hearts, and leaning in a time of weakness on the arm of human friendship! Leaning, too, as so many sufferers have done, on a broken reed."—McGarvey. Another has said, "Every one knows how terrible is suffering in loneliness. The solitary watch in the night hours often becomes a terror to the strong and well. To those in pain it is like an eternity of agony. We can face hard trial and suffering if only we can feel the touch of a loving hand, and know that another shares the trial. This comfort was denied the suffering Savior."

In Great Agony Jesus Prays (Verses 35-42)

Jesus went forward a little from where he had stationed his three companions, and fell on the ground. Standing in prayer is expressive of respect, kneeling is expressive of humility, falling prostrate upon the ground is expressive of utter helplessness and submission. According to Luke he first kneeled down; as the agony of the hour increased, he fell prostrate upon the ground. Any one who has prayed in great agony of soul has realized in his own experience the condition of spirit that prompted Jesus to fall on his face in that awful hour. "And prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass away from him." Matthew reports his words: "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me." In verse thirty-six Mark reports Jesus as saying, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; remove this cup from me." It was physically possible for God to save Jesus from the cross. No combination of men can be stronger than God. Jesus must have meant, "If it be possible to save men any other way than by my death, let the cup pass from me." We shall not be able to understand fully why the death of Christ was absolutely essential to man's salvation; but we can believe that he died for us, and that only through the merits of his blood can we be saved. Concerning the "cup" McGarvey says, "It was common in ancient times to execute criminals by compelling them to drink a cup of poison, and assassination and suicide were often effected by the same means. The cup, therefore became a symbol of suffering and of death, and is so used here." But is that the correct idea? Consider the following: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou hast anointed my head with oil; my cup runneth over." (Psalm 23: 5.) "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of Jehovah." (Psalm 116: 13.) "Neither shall men give them the cup of consolation to drink." (Jer.

16: 7.) Hence, we have the cup of joy, the cup of salvation, the cup of consolation, the cup of suffering.

Not My Will—Thine.—"Howbeit not what I will, but what thou wilt." Both petition and resignation were in that prayer. That should be in every prayer. It is proper and right for a person to be as earnest as possible in presenting his petition, and even persistent. On one occasion Jesus "spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint." A certain widow came off to the judge with the same plea. (Luke 18: 1-8.) And here in Gethsemane Jesus prayed three times, each time saying the same words, with but a few moments intervening between the prayers. But no matter how earnestly we pray, nor how often, we should be resigned to the Lord's will in the matter, being assured that he knows best. There should be no effort made to dictate to God as to what he should do. When we dictate we do not pray.

Not Vain Repetition.—In the sermon on the mount Jesus said, "And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do." (Matt. 6: 7.) Some have thought Jesus here prohibits a repetition of the same petition, but surely he would not violate his own teaching, and yet he prayed three times in rapid succession, saying the same words. Vain repetitions are empty repetitions. No one who is desperately in earnest will be contented with praying once—he will pray again and again, as Jesus did. There is nothing vain about repeating such prayers.

A Gentle Rebuke.—Jesus left the three apostles to watch while he prayed. They had come on a long journey from Galilee to Jerusalem; and, in the excitement of the week, they had found little chance to rest. It must have now been past midnight. They were weary; and in the quietness of the garden they soon fell asleep, thus violating a trust. Jesus had also told them to pray that they enter not into temptation, but they did not know how urgent was their need of prayer. The assurance they expressed on the way to the garden was still with them. They neither watched nor prayed. Had they known what was to come upon them within the hour, they could not have slept. When Jesus returned and found them sleeping, he said to Peter, "Simon, sleepest thou? couldest thou not watch one hour?" But even with this rebuke they fell asleep each time he left them. Returning the third time, having gained full control of himself, he said to them, "Sleep on now, and take your rest." It is possible that some time elapsed after he said this and before he added, "It is enough; the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going: behold, he that betrayeth me is at hand." Or it may be that as he finished telling them to sleep on and rest, he saw the torches of the mob at the entrance of the garden; and then added the other words.

Jesus Betrayed with a Kiss (Verses 43-45)

As the Jewish month began with the new moon and the Passover came on the fifteenth day of the month, the student can see that the mob who came to seize Jesus had the light of the full moon. But even so, they were not sufficiently acquainted with Jesus to know him from the others with him. And, of course, Judas did not want Jesus and the disciples with him to know that he was leading

the mob. He, of course, would precede the mob so as to make it appear that he just arrived by accident a little ahead of them. He had said to the mob, "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he; take him, and lead him away." The fact that he had thought to deceive Jesus by that same kiss shows how little he understood the powers of the Lord; and it shows, too, how base and mean Judas was. Of course, it did not enter his mind that his kiss would become a synonym for base pretensions to friendship throughout the world and for all time. There is no word in the English language that describes the feelings of a sensitive person when he thinks of the kiss of Judas. Antipathy? aversion? repugnance? disgust? they are all too weak! It does seem, that had not Judas been thoroughly hardened, he would have fallen on his knees and begged for pardon when Jesus said to him, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" (Luke 22: 48.)

They Seize Jesus (Verse 46)

"And they laid hands on him, and took him." The printed text of our lesson stops before the scene in the garden was finished. When they laid hands on Jesus Peter wanted to fight. He drew his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, servant of the high priest. Jesus immediately repaired the damage. Had Peter been allowed to fight, he would have made good his avowal to die rather than to forsake Jesus. Jesus taunted the mob for coming heavily armed as if they had come to arrest a dangerous robber. He called attention to their cowardice when he reminded them that they made no attempt to take him while he taught daily in the temple.

SOME REFLECTIONS

We think of Judas as a base character for betraying his Lord. He has been denounced throughout the world. But Jesus died to establish his plan of salvation. Does not a preacher betray him when he avoids preaching some of his truth so as to enhance his popularity and thus increase his income?

When Peter was told to put up his sword, his courage began to fail. He felt that he had no means of defense left. If we could see the situation as it appeared to Peter, we would not denounce him so for denying his Lord. Besides, he did even better than most of the others, for he did follow along to see what would be done to his beloved Master; the others, with the exception of John, fled.

But the scene in the garden centers around Jesus, "who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear; though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation." (Heb. 5: 7-9.)

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The Jewish high court.

Judas—a character study.

How we may now betray the Lord.

Learning obedience.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
Give all the information you can as to the Jewish months and years.

Verse 32

What is the meaning of Gethsemane?
Where was Gethsemane?
Tell about it—as a place of resort.
What gave it prominence?
Give contents of verse 32.
When will the stoutest heart pray?

Verses 33, 34

What arrangement did Jesus make with his disciples while he prayed?
Why should he be sore troubled?
Quote Isa. 53: 3 and John 15: 25.
Why would he long for companionship?

Verses 35-42

What is the significance of standing, kneeling, and falling prostrate, in prayer?
How did Jesus pray?
For what did he pray?
In what sense was it possible, and in what sense not possible, for the cup to pass from Jesus?

What does this figurative use of the word cup signify?
Give quotations for answer to the foregoing.
What does the prayer of Jesus contain?
How many times did Jesus pray the same prayer?
Should we pray often for the same thing?
What are vain repetitions?
What had Jesus told the three apostles to do?
What did they do?
What rebuke did Jesus give?
What did he say to them when he returned the third time?

Verses 43-45

How may we know they had a full moon?
What arrangements had Judas made with the mob?
What shows that he did not know the powers of Jesus?
What else did he not know as to his kiss?
What word more nearly describes your feelings about that kiss?

Verse 46

Tell other things that occurred in the garden.
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XII—June 19, 1938

THE SUFFERING SERVANT

Mark 15: 22-39

- 22 And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.
23 And they offered him wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.
24 And they crucify him, and part his garments among them, casting lots upon them, what each should take.
25 And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.
26 And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS.
27 And with him they crucify two robbers; one on his right hand, and one on his left.
28 And they that passed by rallied on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ha! thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days,
29 Save thyself, and come down from the cross.
30 In like manner also the chief priests mocking him among themselves with the scribes said, He saved others; himself he cannot save.
31 Let the Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reproached him.
32 And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.
33 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?
34 And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elijah.
35 And one ran, and filling a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a reed, and

gave him to drink, saying, Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to take him down.

37 And Jesus uttered a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

38 And the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom.

39 And when the centurion, who stood by over against him, saw that he so gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Mark 10: 45.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 53: 4-9.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

June 13. M.	The Suffering Servant Foretold (Isa. 53: 4-9)
June 14. T.	The Crucifixion (Mark 15: 22-32)
June 15. W.	The Great Sacrifice (Mark 15: 33-41)
June 16. Th.	The Sealed Tomb (Mark 15: 42-47)
June 17. F.	Christ's Priesthood (Heb. 6: 13-20)
June 18. S.	Suffering and Serving (1 Pet. 3: 13-22)
June 19. S.	Sharing Christ's Sufferings (1 Pet. 4: 12-19)

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 27: 33-54; Luke 23: 33-47; John 19: 17-30.

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 31, and on Friday of the Passover week.

Place.—Just outside the city of Jerusalem.

Persons.—Jesus, the Sanhedrin, some of the Jews, the centurion and some of his soldiers. As the Jews could not inflict the death penalty on Jesus, the Roman soldiers nailed him to the cross. The centurion was the commander of these soldiers.

Lesson Links.—The night in which Jesus was betrayed would be a wakeful night for the Jewish authorities, for they knew that Judas was leading a band of men to seize Jesus and bring him before the court. They would be ready to hasten through a pretended trial so as to pronounce formal sentence on him before the multitude learned that they had him in their hands. Jesus had already been condemned in the minds of the court; all they now wanted was the mere form of a trial, so that formal judgment might be pronounced. Jesus was first taken before Annas, who had formerly been high priest. (John 18: 12, 13.) He was then led to Caiaphas, the high priest and son-in-law of Annas. Here came together the members of the Sanhedrin. This court sought, even by the testimony of false witnesses, to find some excuse for which they could pass upon Jesus the sentence of death, but found none. But when Jesus confessed that he was the Christ, the Son of God, the high priest said, "What further need have we of witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be worthy of death." From the court of Caiaphas Jesus was led to Pilate, the Roman governor, for the Jews could not execute their sentence of death. After listening to the charges of the Jews, and having asked Jesus some questions, Pilate's judgment was that he found nothing in him worthy of death. Pilate was cruel and selfish, but he had a sense of judicial fairness; yet he was weak enough to allow the Jews to influence him into signing the death warrant. Pilate's washing his hands was an impressive way of declaring his judgment as to Christ's innocence; but that act did not free him from guilt, for with those

same hands he signed the death warrant of the innocent. In the meantime, when Judas saw what his dastardly crime had led to, his ill-gotten gains became unbearably detestable to him; and he took the money back, and said, "I have betrayed innocent blood." (Matt. 27: 4.) As infamous as Judas was, he was not so bad as these rulers, for they replied, "What is that to us?" What do we care, if he is innocent? Just the same we mean to kill him, and get him out of the way. Can depravity reach greater depths? Only Pilate and Judas, in the whole evil proceedings, seemed to have had enough conscience to bother them.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

They Crucify Him (Verses 22-27)

"And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull." Our word Calvary is from a Latin word of the same meaning. It is a matter of conjecture as to why the place was so called, and its location cannot now be definitely determined. It is said that the wine mingled with myrrh was a stupefying drink, given to those about to be crucified to lessen the pains of crucifixion. As myrrh was bitter, Matthew speaks of it as gall. Matthew says, "When he had tasted it, he would not drink." He would drink nothing that would cloud his mind or deaden his nerves, but would drink to the full the bitter cup of suffering allotted to him.

The Cross.—"And they crucify him." The cross was of two types; one with an upright beam with a crossbar near the top, the other had two beams crossed like the letter X. The hands and feet were either tied or nailed to the cross. Jesus was nailed to the cross. (See Luke 24: 39, 40; John 20: 25, 27.) No one can conceive of the suffering attending the crashing of rough spikes through the hands and the feet; and even greater pains, if possible, would come during the long hours of hanging on the cross when much of the weight of the body must be held up by the hands growing more tender and painful from inflammation. It would seem that human ingenuity never devised a more cruel method of torture. Jews did not crucify Jews, nor did Romans crucify Romans. The victim was nailed to the cross, and then the cross was elevated, and let drop into the hole prepared to receive it. There would be no need for the cross to be so high as it is represented in pictures, and such was not the case. The feet would be but little above the ground. The soldier could reach the side of the Savior with his spear, and the soldiers could easily break the legs of the victims. "And it was the third hour, and they crucified him." That was, according to Jewish count, nine o'clock in the morning. Perhaps it was while they were driving the nails that Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." There was no bitterness in his heart toward those who were dealing so cruelly with him. Nailed to the cross, above his head was his accusation, "The King of the Jews." The Jews demanded that Pilate change the wording of that superscription, for it was humiliating to them to have passers-by to read that the Romans had crucified the king of the Jews. Pilate dismissed them with the curt reply, "What I have written I have written."

Between Two Thieves.—Whether by design or not, they added

more shame and humiliation to his shameful crucifixion by putting his cross between those of two thieves, whom they crucified at the same time. These robbers may have been members of the band of Barabbas.

They Railed on Jesus and Mocked Him (Verses 29-32)

The place of crucifixion must have been near one of the roads leading into Jerusalem, so that those passing in or out of the city would see the victims on the cross. People in their right senses would be moved to pity at the sight of such suffering; but instead of feeling pity for the sufferers many of the people were so depraved and so bereft of the common feelings of humanity that they gloated at the sight, and "railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ha! thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down from the cross." It is strange that this perversion of what the Lord said should have gained such currency as to be in the mouth of every perverse person in the city. He had harmed none of these, and yet they were gloating over his suffering. Even the chief priests and the scribes, forgetting the dignity of their position and the sanctity of their high office, now gloating over their apparently helpless victim, said, "He saved others; himself he cannot save." They said this in a spirit of derision, and yet they knew that they spoke the truth when they said, "He saved others." At least, they knew he had saved others from much physical inconvenience and suffering. He had raised Lazarus from the dead, and they knew that; and they had plotted the death of Lazarus to keep people from believing on Jesus because of him. He had restored sight to a blind man, and they knew that. Within the week he had restored sight to blind people and had healed the lame before their eyes in the temple. And yet they crucified him and were now mocking him. What they did not know was that his death was according to God's plan, and that by his death he would save countless thousands then unborn. Neither did they know that soon this same Jesus would be exalted at God's right hand, and that many thousands of these mocking Jews would soon bow to the authority of this same Jesus. Neither would they have believed had Jesus come down from the cross. Their lack of faith was not due to a lack of evidence, but to their own perversity in refusing to accept the evidence. They had had plenty of evidence; they were disbelievers, rather than unbelievers. It is true even now that a lack of faith is due to a condition of the heart rather than to insufficiency of evidence. Even the thieves that were crucified with Christ reproached him. Luke says, "And one of the malefactors that were hanged railed on him, saying, Art not thou the Christ? save thyself and us. But the other answered, and rebuking him said, Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss." Likely both at first reproached him; but as the painful hours went slowly by, one of them, watching the behavior of Jesus on the cross and witnessing the unnatural darkness and the earthquake, reflected seriously over matters and repented.

Jesus Calls Upon God (Verses 33-36)

The sixth hour was noon, and the ninth hour three o'clock. During these three hours, the time in which the sun beats down upon the earth in its full strength, there was darkness over the land. At the end of the period of darkness Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani," which, translated, is, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" That was a cry of distress and anguish. Though that was a heart-rending cry, it was not so strange, as some think, that Jesus should make it, if we remember that sin separates from God, and that Christ, in dying for man, became as though he were a sinner, and was, for the moment, separated from God as a sinner, that his sacrifice might be complete. Nor is it strange that any Jew should have so misunderstood him as to think he was calling for Elijah. He had then been on the cross six hours. He would be so weak from suffering and the loss of blood and his mouth so parched and dry from thirst, becoming intense from the loss of blood and from fever produced by increasing inflammation of his wounds, that his speech would not be very clear and distinct. He could easily be misunderstood. It was at this time that Jesus said, "I thirst," or else some one standing by saw that he was thirsty, and ran, "and filling a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to take him down." With the natural phenomena that they had witnessed, they were ready to believe anything might happen. The vinegar was a sour wine which the soldiers had brought with them to drink.

Jesus Dies (Verses 37, 38)

John says, "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit." Luke reports him as saying, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Putting the two expressions together we have: "Father, it is finished; into thy hands I commend my spirit; and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit." Jesus was dead, and the statement he made in his prayer the night before was fulfilled: "I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do." He had purchased with his own blood man's redemption from sin; the just had died for the unjust. And at his death ended the Old Covenant. (Col. 2: 14, 15.) The veil of the temple was rent in two from top to bottom. The veil separated the holy place from the most holy place. The full significance of the rending of this veil we may not know. Matthew adds this information: "And the earth did quake; and the rocks were rent; and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised; and coming forth out of the tombs after his resurrection they entered into the holy city and appeared unto many." These doubtless were saints that had recently died and with whom the people of Jerusalem were acquainted; otherwise the people would have thought they were only strangers that had come to the city. John also relates an occurrence that the others do not record. "When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold, thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold, thy mother!" In his distress and suffer-

ing he did not forget to provide a home for his mother in her declining years.

The Centurion's Testimony (Verse 39)

Doubtless the centurion had seen many criminals die on the cross. In superintending the crucifixion of Jesus and the two thieves, he was merely carrying out the orders of his governor. To him they had been three more criminals to be executed. To him it was no more than a duty to be performed without any feelings of personal responsibility in the matter. But then strange things began to happen. The three hours of darkness, beginning at midday—he had never seen anything like that. He had never seen any one on the cross behave as Jesus did. And there was the earthquake—he could not explain that. Matthew says, "Now the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, when they saw the earthquake, and the things that were done, feared exceedingly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God." And such is the verdict of every one who has given honest consideration to the testimony concerning Jesus. As the centurion was part of the governor's guard, his headquarters were at Cesarea. Could he have been Cornelius?

SOME REFLECTIONS

Those who were engaged in trying and condemning Jesus were themselves on trial and proved themselves worthy of death, but did not know it. We are all constantly on trial, and the Lord will render the final verdict.

Jesus lived and died for others, and gave the world an example of unselfish service. A man who is never moved except by a selfish motive is little better than an animal.

No rational person can escape responsibility. Washing his hands did not free Pilate from responsibility in the crucifixion of Christ. Playing neutral does not free us from responsibility. A man is either for the right or against it, no matter what he pretends to be.

It is singular that the centurion, a heathen, was the only one in or near Jerusalem that attached any special significance to the things that occurred in connection with the crucifixion of Jesus. The rest were too blinded by fanaticism.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

- Prophecies of Christ's death.
- Why the Jewish leaders hated Jesus.
- The cross the end of the law of Moses.
- The thief on the cross.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
Give outline of the events the night Jesus was seized.

Why did Pilate deliver Jesus up to be crucified?

Verses 22-27

At what place was Jesus crucified?
What did they offer him to drink, and why.
How were victims fastened to the cross?

How was Jesus fastened to the cross?
 What did Pilate write as the accusation against Jesus?
 Who objected to the wording, and why?
 What was Pilate's reply?

Verses 29-32

What did the onlookers do and say?
 What did the priests and scribes say?
 What did these people know that Jesus had done?
 Why did they not believe?

Verses 33-36

What supernatural thing occurred?

What did Jesus say at the ninth hour?
 What did some think Jesus said?
 What did one do and say?

Verses 37, 38

What were the last words of Jesus on the cross?
 How is his death described?
 For whom did Jesus die?
 What ended at the cross?

Verse 39

Tell about the centurion, and why he was convinced.
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XIII—June 26, 1938

SHARING SERVICE WITH THE LIVING CHRIST

Mark 16: 1-8, 14-16, 19, 20

1 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint him.
 2 And very early on the first day of the week, they come to the tomb when the sun was risen.

3 And they were saying among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the tomb?

4 And looking up, they see that the stone is rolled back: for it was exceeding great.

5 And entering into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, arrayed in a white robe; and they were amazed.

6 And he saith unto them, Be not amazed: ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, who hath been crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold, the place where they laid him!

7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter, He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

8 And they went out, and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them: and they said nothing to any one; for they were afraid.

14 And afterward he was manifested unto the eleven themselves as they sat at meat; and he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them that had seen him after he was risen.

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.

19 So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.

20 And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed. Amen.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them."* (Mark 16: 20.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 16: 1, 2, 7-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

June 20. M.	Deliverance from Death (Psalm 16: 5-11)
June 21. T.	The Empty Tomb (Mark 16: 1-8)
June 22. W.	The Visible Christ (Mark 16: 9-16)
June 23. T.	The Ascending Lord (Mark 16: 17-20)
June 24. F.	Resurrection and Life (John 11: 17-27)
June 25. S.	"Alive for Evermore" (Rev. 1: 9-18)
June 26. S.	Jesus' Prophecy Concerning Himself (Matt. 16: 21-28)

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 28: 1-10, 18-20; Luke 24: 1-12, 45-49; Acts 1: 1-8.

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—A.D. 31. The events recorded in the first part of the lesson occurred early Sunday morning; the other matters occurred later during the forty days before the ascension of Christ.

Place.—Jerusalem. The Great Commission as recorded by Mark seems to have been given in Jerusalem.

Persons.—Jesus, the eleven apostles, two Marys, and an angel.

Lesson Links.—Many things done in connection with the death and the resurrection of Christ show in a striking way how God can overrule the purposes and deeds of wicked men to make them serve his own plans and purposes. That the resurrection of Christ might be placed beyond doubt, it was necessary that his enemies pronounce him dead, else they might say afterwards that his seeming death was only a swoon. Pilate rendered this service by refusing to give up his body to be buried till he was assured by the centurion who had charge of the execution that Jesus was dead. Only then did Pilate give up his body to Joseph, who, with the assistance of Nicodemus, tenderly laid it in Joseph's new tomb. But what was to hinder his disciples from stealing his body and announcing that it had been raised from the dead? Here his enemies among the Jews came in with their help. They went to Pilate with this plea: "Sir, we remember that that deceiver said while he was yet alive, After three days I rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest haply his disciples come and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: and the last error will be worse than the first." At Pilate's orders they put the governor's seal on the tomb, and set a guard over it, thus making it as sure as they could. In their zeal to see that no fraud was perpetrated, they made it certain that no fraud was palmed off on the people. They made it impossible for the disciples to steal the body away, and yet it disappeared. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee." (Psalm 76: 10.) When it was announced that Jesus had arisen, these leaders realized that they had made about the worst mistake they could have made. Then to cover up their mistakes they hired the guards to tell the absurd story that the disciples stole the body away while they were asleep! If it be said that Matthew may not have told the truth about this incident, be it remembered that Matthew wrote his record while the parties accused were still living. None of them wrote any denial, which they would have done had not Matthew's record been true. The only sensible explanation of the disappearing of the body of Jesus is that he arose from the dead.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Women Visit the Tomb (Verses 1-4)

The student should read carefully all the parallel passages. He will find it difficult to place some of the events in their proper settings. Matthew records an incident not mentioned by the others: "And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and

sat upon it. His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men." This was before full daylight. As soon as the guards recovered their strength and wit sufficiently to do so, some of them went into the city and told the chief priests what had occurred. Of these things the disciples, at the time, knew nothing; it is not likely that they knew a guard had been placed at the tomb. "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint him." "Mary Magdalene" means Mary of Magdala. Magdala was a city on the west coast of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had cast seven demons out of Mary Magdalene, for which she was bound to him with the strong ties of undying gratitude. She was a good woman, and possessed some means, for she had ministered to Jesus of her substance. (Luke 8: 2, 3.) Mary the mother of James is referred to in Mark 15: 40 as "Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses." Salome was the wife of Zebedee and the mother of James and John. These good women had made some preparations for this anointing on the day Jesus was crucified, but did not have time to finish their self-imposed task of love before the beginning of the Sabbath. They most likely spent the Sabbath in Bethany, from which place they started to the tomb before daylight Sunday morning. To finish their preparations for the anointing they had to go through Jerusalem to purchase additional spices. While they did not reach the tomb till after the sun was up, it was very early for them to reach the tomb after having passed through Jerusalem to purchase additional spices on their way from Bethany. It is evident that the other writers speak of the time at which they started to the tomb, and Mark speaks of the time of their arrival. Had these women known that a guard had been placed at the tomb and that the governor's seal was upon it, they would not have come to anoint the body, for they would not have dared to break the governor's seal. Neither did they know that an angel had already broken the seal, and that the guards had fled. They were only aware of the fact that it would be difficult for them to move the stone, and were discussing the question: "Who shall roll us away the stone?" At that juncture they came near enough to see that the stone was already rolled away. Mary Magdalene remained no longer than to see that the body of Jesus was gone, and then rushed away to tell Peter and John, saying to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him." The other women had remained at the tomb. No one can imagine how excited and bewildered these women were.

The Angel and His Message (Verses 5-8)

"And entering into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, arrayed in a white robe; and they were amazed." This was the angel of whom Matthew spoke and concerning whom he said, "His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow." Matthew says the angel rolled away the stone and sat upon it, but he had entered the tomb before the women arrived. Luke mentions two angels. This seeming discrepancy is explained on the grounds that one did the talking. The angel said, "Be not amazed: ye seek

Jesus, the Nazarene, who hath been crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold, the place where they laid him!" No mere human being could have made such announcement as that in words so simple and direct. In its very simplicity it bears the stamp of its divine origin. "He is risen"—this is a translation of only one Greek word. With one word the angel announced the greatest event that has occurred since the beginning of the world! "But go, tell his disciples and Peter." We are not to understand that this puts Peter outside the list of disciples, but rather singles him out as one that they must be certain to see. It is a form of speech by which special prominence is given to the person named. Peter needed to know that his beloved Master had not turned against him. He had bitterly denied his Lord, and had had no chance to confess to his Lord. After the shame and remorse he had suffered since he denied his Lord, Peter needed to know that the Lord had not forsaken him nor cast him off, but had him specially in mind. And what relief and comfort that knowledge was to Peter! "He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you." On the way to the garden of Gethsemane the night of his betrayal, he said to his apostles, "Howbeit, after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee." Jesus had appointed a certain mountain in Galilee for this meeting with them. As this was an appointed meeting, it must have been the time when he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, for so many people would not come together in an accidental meeting. (1 Cor. 15: 6.) He must have appointed that meeting for a point in Galilee, for the most of his disciples were in that region.

The Great Commission (Verses 14-16)

Jesus appeared to his disciples many times after his resurrection—"to whom he also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God." (Acts 1: 3.) This shows that he taught them much during these forty days. The matters contained in the commission would be the subject matter of these different speeches. The records of this commission by Matthew, Mark, and Luke are evidently condensed reports of different speeches. Matthew gives a condensed report of the speech made at the meeting in Galilee; Mark and Luke give the substance of things said in Jerusalem. To get the commission in full the items of these different reports must be added together. On the day Jesus arose he appeared to the women who visited the tomb, to the two disciples at Emmaus, and to Peter; but the other disciples did not believe the report of these witnesses. When therefore Jesus appeared to the eleven as they sat at meat, "he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them that had seen him after he was risen."

The Gospel for All.—God would no longer deal exclusively with the Jews. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation." Previous to this they were forbidden to tell any one that Jesus was the Christ; now they are commanded to announce it to every creature. In Luke's record of the commission they were commanded to begin this preaching in Jerusalem, but not to begin till they received the Holy Spirit. Even the apostles did not at first

grasp the truth that the gospel was for Gentiles as well as for Jews. All Christians need to realize that their field of operation is the world.

Two Roads and Two Goals.—(1) "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but (2) he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." What you are to do depends on what you want, which goal you wish to reach. If you want salvation, the way is plain—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." If you want to be condemned, the way is equally plain—"He that disbelieveth shall be condemned." The way to either goal is as plain as language can make it. There was no need for Jesus to say, "He that disbelieveth and refuses to be baptized shall be condemned"; for disbelief leads to disobedience to every other command. Besides, first settle which goal you wish to reach, and then read the directions.

The Lord Worked with Them and Confirmed the Word by Signs (Verses 19, 20)

Just before the Lord ascended to heaven, the apostles, with the old kingdom of Israel in mind, inquired, "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus replied, "It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority. 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." Then Jesus was received up into heaven, "and sat down at the right hand of God." This is the exaltation of Christ of which Peter spoke: "Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear." "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." (Acts 2: 33, 36.) In the preaching of these apostles the Lord was with them, "confirming the word by the signs that followed." Miracles wrought in connection with some one's preaching were signs that God was with the preacher, and that his preaching was true. They were the credentials of one who was making a new revelation. Jesus said, "The very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." (John 5: 36.) Nicodemus said to Jesus, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." (John 3: 2.) As there is no new revelation now to be confirmed, no signs are performed. No miracles are worked in connection with any man's preaching as a sign that God is with him. The word that he should preach has already been confirmed. It is interesting to compare Mark 16: 15-20 with Heb. 2: 3, 4. It will be seen that Jesus first spoke this great salvation when he gave the Great Commission.

SOME REFLECTIONS

If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then Christianity is a meaningless system, a system without foundation, and we are yet in our sins.

A man makes too broad a statement when he says that miracles have ceased. Signs have ceased, but the resurrection of the dead and

the end of the world are miracles yet to be. However, these great miracles will not be signs for confirming anybody's preaching.

Christianity has made good citizens out of criminals and dishonest people, purified the immoral, and put new hope into many who were in despair. A tree is known by its fruits, and the fruits of the religion of Christ are good. Falsehood cannot bear such good fruit.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The commission as given by Matthew.

The commission as given by Mark.

The commission as given by Luke.

The sum of all the reports.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
What did the enemies of Christ do that made it certain that Christ arose from the dead?
Who buried Christ?
What did the enemies do that shows that the disciples could not have stolen the body?

Verses 1-4

What incident does Matthew alone record?
Tell about the women who came early to the tomb.

Verses 5-8

What is said of the appearance of the angel?
What did the angel say to the women?
Why single out Peter?
What appointment did the angel mention?
What then did the woman do?

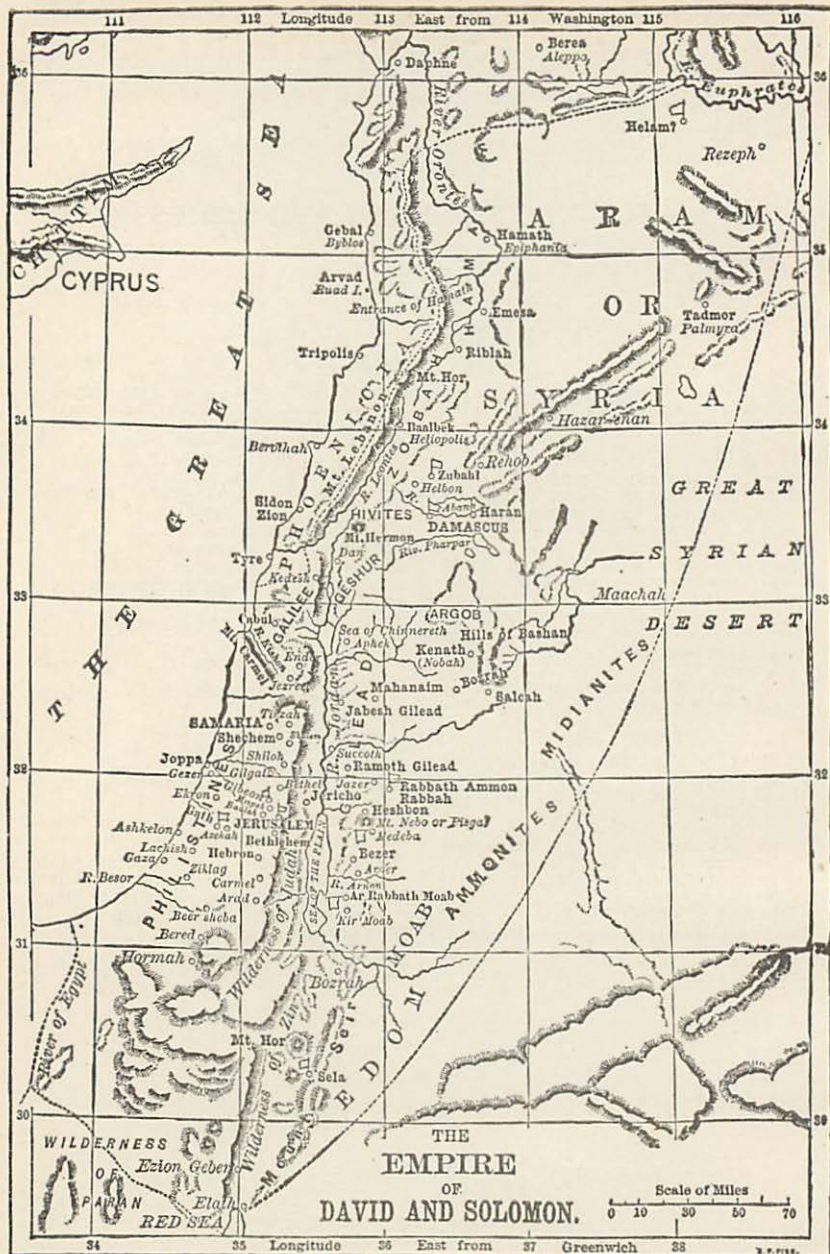
Verses 14-16

How many days between the resurrection and the ascension of Christ?

Concerning what did Jesus speak to his disciples during those days?
Who records the Great Commission?
Where was Matthew's account of the commission spoken?
Where Mark's and Luke's?
To whom did Jesus appear the day of his resurrection?
When did he see the others?
For whom is the gospel?
Repeat the commission.
What two goals are mentioned?
What leads to them?
What does disbelief cause?

Verses 19, 20

What did the apostles ask Jesus about the kingdom?
What reply did Jesus make?
What is said of Jesus when he ascended to heaven?
Quote the language of Peter on this point.
How was the preaching of the apostles confirmed?
Miracles wrought in connection with a man's preaching are called what?
What did Jesus say of his works?
Repeat what Nicodemus said.
Why have signs ceased?
Have miracles ceased?
Discuss the reflections.



THIRD QUARTER

MESSAGES FROM ISRAEL'S EARLY LEADERS

AIM: *Through a study of success and failure in the lives of some of Israel's early leaders to find guidance and enrichment for present-day living and inspiration for closer fellowship with God and fruitful service in his kingdom.*

Lesson I—July 3, 1938

JOSHUA: A CHOICE OF LOYALTIES

Josh. 1: 2-6; 24: 14-21

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

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

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

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

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

14 Now therefore fear Jehovah, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt; and serve ye Jehovah.

15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah.

16 And the people answered and said, Far be it from us that we should forsake Jehovah, to serve other gods;

17 For Jehovah our God, he it is that brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and that did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the peoples through the midst of whom we passed;

18 And Jehovah drove out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites that dwelt in the land: therefore we also will serve Jehovah; for he is our God.

19 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve Jehovah; for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgression nor your sins.

20 If ye forsake Jehovah, and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you evil, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.

21 And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve Jehovah.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“As for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah.” (Josh. 24: 15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 119: 1-8.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

June 27.	M.	Joshua: God's Choice (Josh. 1: 2-6)
June 28.	T.	God: Joshua's Choice (Josh. 24: 14-21)
June 29.	W.	Jehovah or Baal? (1 Kings 18: 20-24)
June 30.	T.	God or Mammon? (Matt. 6: 24-29)
July 1.	F.	Christ or the World? (John 6: 66-71)
July 2.	S.	Life or Death? (Ezek. 33: 11-16)
July 3.	S.	Blessedness of Right Choices (Psalm 119: 1-8)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For the first section of our lesson, according to Usher, 1451 B.C.; according to Hales, 1608 B.C. For the second section, according to Usher, 1443 B.C.; according to Hales, 1596 B.C.

Places.—In the first section of the lesson, the children of Israel were in camp east of the Jordan near the north end of the Dead Sea. In the second section of the lesson, they were at Shechem, as will be seen by reading Josh. 24: 1.

Persons.—Jehovah, Joshua, and the children of Israel. Joshua was an Ephraimite, the son of Nun. He was Moses' helper, and the military leader in their journey from Egypt, and in their conquest of the land of Canaan.

Lesson Links.—Joshua first comes into notice soon after the children of Israel came out of Egypt, when the Amalekites made war against them. Joshua led Israel to victory in that battle. (Ex. 17: 8-13.) He is frequently referred to as the minister of Moses. He was the faithful helper of Moses in all the wilderness journeys, being always a true servant of the Lord. When the children of Israel reached the wilderness of Paran in their direct march toward Canaan, twelve men were sent to spy out the land. Joshua was one of the number. When the spies returned, they gave a glowing report of the country they went through; but ten of them said the inhabitants of that land were too mighty for them to conquer. Joshua and Caleb contended that they were able to take the land. The congregation sided with the majority of the spies, and planned to elect new leaders and return to Egypt. In this they were very much like some churches of today when the elders will not lead the way they want to go. For their rebellion the children of Israel were condemned to wander from place to place in the wilderness till all that were then men and women perished, excepting Caleb and Joshua. Those that were then children would be allowed to enter the land of promise. (For this interesting bit of history read the thirteenth and the fourteenth chapters of Numbers.) They could have gone on into the land of Canaan, had it not been for this rebellion. For a period of about thirty-seven years they wandered about in the wilderness, so that the entire time between leaving Egypt and entering Canaan was forty years. Because Moses did not obey God on one occasion, he was not allowed to enter the land of promise. (Num. 20: 7-12, 23, 24; 27: 12-14.) When the time drew near for the children of Israel to enter Canaan, Moses rehearsed the law, which rehearsal is recorded in the book of Deuteronomy; he also appointed Joshua as his successor, as Jehovah had commanded. (Deut. 3: 23-28; 31: 1-8; 34: 9.) "And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And Jehovah showed him all the land. . . . And Jehovah said unto him, This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses the servant of Jehovah died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of Jehovah. And he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." (Deut. 34: 1-6.)

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

**Joshua Commanded to Cross the Jordan and Take the Land
(Verses 2-4)**

During the lifetime of Moses Jehovah spoke to the people through him. "Now it came to pass after the death of Moses the servant of Jehovah, that Jehovah spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister." (Verse 1.) "And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as Jehovah commanded Moses." (Deut. 34: 9.) "Moses my servant is dead." Moses was one of the greatest men of all history. Read what is said of him in Deut. 34: 10-12. He died at the age of one hundred and twenty: "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." (Deut. 34: 7.) But now Joshua is to lead the people over the river Jordan into the land of promise, "the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel." Jehovah was giving them the land, and yet to gain possession they would have to drive out the nations before them. The land was a gift, yet they would have to undergo many hardships and engage in much fighting before they would come into full possession of their inheritance. The extent of the territory that was to be theirs is outlined in verse four. A glance at the map will show how vast this territory was, which they were to subdue and possess; but their possessing the land depended on their obedience to Jehovah. But if they should turn away from Jehovah and serve other gods, Jehovah said, "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over the Jordan to possess it." (Deut. 4: 26.)

Jehovah Encourages Joshua (Verses 5, 6)

Joshua was to enter on a new experience. Since they had left Egypt, he had been under the direction of Moses. Now he is to take the place of Moses as leader. To possess the land of promise would require much war, for that land was inhabited by people who were inured to war. They knew how to fight, and they had many walled cities. A wall around a city now gives no real protection, but to tear down a wall in possession of an enemy in those days was a dangerous and laborious task. But Jehovah had commanded the people of Israel to go over the Jordan and drive out the enemy, and he does not command people to do that which is impossible for them to do. He promised to be with them and to make their faithful efforts successful. To Joshua he said, "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life"—that is, so long as he and the people were faithful to him, so long as they made it possible for Jehovah to be with them, he would not fail them nor forsake them. These were comforting words to Joshua; and in view of the task before him, he needed just such words of assurance. And is not the God of Joshua our God today? We cannot think that Jehovah is less interested in those who are now fighting his battles than he was then. Even though Joshua, as the minister of Moses, had been forty years in training for this work, he yet needed the encouragement that Jehovah gave him. "Be strong and of good

courage; for thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land which I swear unto their fathers to give them." The land was to be a gift, and yet the people had to drive out the nations before they could come into their inheritance. And their success in driving out the nations depended on their faithfulness to Jehovah, as the next two verses clearly show. Only by being faithful to Jehovah could they have good success wherever they went.

"Choose You This Day Whom Ye Will Serve" (Josh. 24: 14, 15)

The children of Israel under the leadership of Joshua had conquered many of the nations of Canaan and of the country beyond the Jordan. (Josh. 12.) Some scattered nations remained which the Israelites were later to subdue. (Josh. 23: 4, 5.) After the land was sufficiently subdued for the people to settle peaceably in their homes, the land was divided into districts, and given to the tribes of Israel. When all this was finished Joshua assembled the people at Shechem for his farewell talk with them. It appears that the leaders came first, and he said to them, "And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which Jehovah your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, not one thing hath failed thereof." But he gave them this warning: "When ye transgress the covenant of Jehovah your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods, and bow down yourselves to them; then will the anger of Jehovah be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you." (Josh. 23: 14-16.) Language could not have been plainer to show them that their remaining in the land was conditional. God never ties himself up with promises that will later make him a partner with evil men. "Now therefore fear Jehovah." To fear Jehovah is to regard him with reverence. This is the beginning of all acceptable obedience. To serve Jehovah in sincerity and in truth is to serve him with the whole heart and according to his law, his revealed truth. It requires the laying aside of all pretense and every doctrine and commandment of men. It is strange, that after all Jehovah had done for the Israelites, and after the mighty works they had seen, there was yet among them some that held to the worship of idols. It is plainly declared in verse twenty-three that they had foreign gods among them. They had worshiped these idols in Egypt, most likely the gods of the Egyptians. They also had gods that their forefathers served before Abraham was called out of the land of the Chaldees. The river mentioned here is the Euphrates River. It is clear therefore that Abraham came out of idolatrous surroundings. His faith is therefore all the more remarkable. It is likely that many of the children of Israel who believed in Jehovah still held on to their idols. Now Joshua is calling on them to make a definite decision as to whether they would serve idols or Jehovah. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." They must decide between idols and Jehovah; they could no longer go halting between the two forms of worship and service. Joshua was not going to try to force them either way; they had the liberty

of choosing whom they would serve. Joshua's mind had been made up, at least, ever since they left Egypt. "As for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah." In all that Joshua did he showed himself to be a worthy successor of Moses.

The People Vow Allegiance to Jehovah (Verses 16-18)

The people readily and emphatically vowed that they would not forsake Jehovah to serve other gods. Their language shows that they were not ignorant of the great things Jehovah had done for them in bringing them out of Egypt, in giving them food to eat and water to drink, and in performing all the other great signs in their sight. They knew, too, that Jehovah had guarded them from harm as they passed through the nations along the way. They confessed also that it was Jehovah's mighty power that had driven the nations out of Canaan before them. They knew that of their own strength they could not have conquered the land. "Therefore we also will serve Jehovah; for he is our God." No doubt they were sincere in making that declaration, though events proved that they soon forgot their vow. Their whole history from that time on is composed of a series of forgetting the Lord and turning to him. And their history shows how frail human beings are even under the most favorable circumstances.

Cannot Serve Jehovah and Idols (Verses 19-21)

Putting together what is said in verses nineteen and twenty Joshua was telling them that they could not serve both Jehovah and idols. Certainly he was not telling them in verse nineteen that they could not serve Jehovah at all, for he had just said, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." Neither did the people understand him to mean that it was impossible for them to serve Jehovah under any circumstances, for they immediately said, "Nay; but we will serve Jehovah." But they could not serve Jehovah and other gods; to attempt to do so was to forsake Jehovah. "If ye forsake Jehovah, and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you evil, and consume you, after that he hath done you good." Moses had said, "And it shall be, if thou shalt forget Jehovah thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations that Jehovah maketh to perish before you, so shall ye perish." (Deut. 8: 19, 20.) These nations perished to rise no more as nations, and so would Israel perish. Joshua assigns two reasons for their not being able to serve Jehovah and other gods: (1) "For he is a holy God." Being holy, he could not condone evil in them by allowing them to serve idols while serving him. Besides, to allow them to be his servants and the servants of idols would make him and idols joint owners of servants. Being holy, he could not be a partner with idols in owning servants. (2) "He is a jealous God." He must have the undivided loyalty of his servants; he must have no rivals.

SOME REFLECTIONS

If a man believes in God as he should, he will not hesitate to do anything God commands.

Jehovah gave the land of Canaan to the children of Israel; yet they had to do much to come into possession of the gift. And so also is salvation a gift, but it also is conditional.

One thing is often overlooked, namely, that God is as faithful in carrying out his threats as he is in bestowing his promises. While it is true that God is love, it is also true that our God is a consuming fire. Let us beware, lest we forget.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Moses the servant of Jehovah.
Joshua the successor of Moses.
The wilderness journey.
The conquest of Canaan.
The land promise conditional.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
Who was Joshua?
When does Joshua first come into notice?
What position did he occupy in the wilderness journeys?
Give account of the sending of the spies.
Why did the Israelites wander in the wilderness so long?
Why did not Moses enter Canaan?
Give account of the death of Moses.
Who was his successor?

Verses 2-4

What did Jehovah say to Joshua?
What was the extent of the land which Israel was to possess?

Verses 5, 6

How were the people to gain possession of the land of Canaan?
What assurance of success did Jehovah give Joshua?
What did he exhort Joshua to do?
To whom was this land promise first made?
On what did their success in driving out the nations depend?

Josh. 24: 14, 15

What success had attended the children of Israel in their wars with the nations of Canaan?
What had been done with the land?
What did Joshua say to the leaders about the fulfilment of the promises?
What would happen if they forsook Jehovah?
What shows that their remaining in the land was conditional?
What did he exhort the people to do?
What is it to fear Jehovah?
What is said of the gods of their fathers?
What did Joshua call on the people to do?
What pledge did he make for himself and family?

Verses 16-18

Discuss the pledge the people gave, and their reasons for making it.

Verses 19-21

Under what conditions could they not serve Jehovah?
What had Moses said would be the results of their serving other gods?
Why should they not serve Jehovah and other gods?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson II—July 10, 1938

CALEB: LIFETIME DEVOTION

Josh. 14: 6-15

6 Then the children of Judah drew nigh unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that Jehovah spake unto Moses the man of God concerning me and concerning thee in Kadesh-barnea.

7 Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of Jehovah sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in my heart.

8 Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt; but I wholly followed Jehovah my God.

9 And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy foot hath trodden shall be an inheritance to thee and to thy children for ever, because thou hast wholly followed Jehovah my God.

10 And now, behold, Jehovah hath kept me alive, as he spake, these forty and five years, from the time that Jehovah spake this word unto Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old.

11 As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, and to go out and to come in.

12 Now therefore give me this hill-country, whereof Jehovah spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakim were there, and cities great and fortified: it may be that Jehovah will be with me, and I shall drive them out, as Jehovah spake.

13 And Joshua blessed him; and he gave Hebron unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance.

14 Therefore Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite unto this day; because that he wholly followed Jehovah, the God of Israel.

15 Now the name of Hebron beforetime was Kiriath-arba; which Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim. And the land had rest from war.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.” (Num. 13: 30.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 121.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

July 4. M.	Caleb at Forty (Josh. 14: 6-9)
July 5. T.	Caleb at Eighty-Five (Josh. 14: 10-15)
July 6. W.	The Strength of Jehovah (Psalm 71: 12-18)
July 7. T.	Remembering God in Youth (Eccles. 11: 7 to 12: 1)
July 8. F.	“A Crown of Glory” (Prov. 16: 23-33)
July 9. S.	Renewing One's Youth (Psalm 103: 1-6)
July 10. S.	Jehovah My Keeper (Psalm 121: 1-8)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—According to Usher, 1445 B.C.; according to Hales, 1602 B.C.

Place.—Gilgal. Immediately after crossing the Jordan the children of Israel “encamped in Gilgal, on the east border of Jericho.” (Josh. 4: 19.) It seems to have continued to be their headquarters during their wars of conquest, and it continued to be an important city in their history for many years.

Persons.—Caleb, Joshua, and the tribe of Judah.

Lesson Links.—Caleb the son of Jephunneh first comes into notice in the thirteenth chapter of Numbers. He was one of the twelve spies that were sent to spy out the land of Canaan. He represented the tribe of Judah. When the spies returned at the end of forty

days, they brought a glowing report of the land, and described it as a land flowing with milk and honey; but the majority of the spies said the inhabitants were giants and dwelt in fortified cities, and that they were not able to conquer the land. Caleb, with Joshua, urged that they go up at once and possess the land, for they were well able to do so. But the people sided with the majority of the spies, and said, "Our wives and our little ones will be a prey: were it not better for us to return into Egypt?" Joshua and Caleb urged immediate invasion of the land. "If Jehovah delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it unto us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not against Jehovah, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is removed from over them, and Jehovah is with us: fear them not." It required both faith and courage to make that plea when practically the whole nation was against them. "But all the congregation bade stone them with stones." It reminds one of some of the church fusses of today. The glory of Jehovah appeared in the tent of meeting, and this seems to have stopped the murderous intentions of the people. Jehovah then said to the people, "Your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, that have murmured against me, surely ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swore that I would make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, that ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have rejected. But as for you, your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness." They were to wander in the wilderness forty years, a year for every day of spying out the land. For two men to stand against millions of their own people required a high degree of faith and courage. The incident shows how unreliable majorities are when they are excited. Read carefully the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of Numbers.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Caleb and the Children of Judah Appear Before Joshua (Verse 6)

The incident told in this lesson occurred seven or eight years after the children of Israel crossed the river Jordan. It seems that they had, during these years, been continuously engaged in subduing the land; and there were yet many enemies to be subdued. (Josh. 13: 1-7.) But they had conquered sufficient territory to meet their present need for homes, and each tribe had begun to take possession of its allotted territory. "As Jehovah commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did; and they divided the land." (Verse 5.) The student should consult the map to see the territory allotted to each tribe. As Caleb, or possibly his father, is referred to as a Kenizzite, it is possible that he was a foreigner, who, after becoming a proselyte, had attached himself to the tribe of Judah. His possession would therefore be in the territory allotted to the tribe of Judah. When he came to Joshua to make his plea for a certain possession, the men of his tribe came with him. They all knew that Joshua would want to know whether it was satisfactory with the whole tribe for Caleb

to have the possession he desired. It is evident therefore that these men came with Caleb to assist him in making a satisfactory arrangement for the possession he desired. Jehovah had promised to give Caleb the land he had spied out, though the condensed record in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of Numbers does not definitely so state. Some of the district which Caleb desired for a possession had not yet been cleared of enemies.

Caleb States the Grounds for a Request (Verses 7-11)

Caleb was forty years old when he was sent from Kadesh-barnea with eleven other men to spy out the promised land. In verse ten he says, "Lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old." As the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness thirty-seven or thirty-eight years after they refused to go on up into Canaan, Caleb was seventy-seven or seventy-eight years old when they crossed the river Jordan. He was now eighty-five years old. They had therefore been engaged seven or eight years in this war of conquest. As Joshua was one hundred and ten years old when he died, he must have been about one hundred years old when they crossed the Jordan into Canaan. Hence, among all that vast throng that crossed the Jordan Caleb and Joshua were the only two that were over sixty years old. Concerning his report after spying out the land Caleb says, "And I brought him word again as it was in my heart." He had been fair and honest in the report he made to Moses. To make a fair and honest report he had to be accurate in observation and cool in judgment. The size of the giants in that land had not so frightened him as to cause his imagination to magnify their strength. Strong emotions do warp the judgment. This may account in part for the exaggerated report the ten spies made. Said they, "The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature. . . . We were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." (Num. 13: 32, 33.) This report "made the heart of the people melt." It took all the courage out of them, and made them feel helpless. If the people had believed in Jehovah, all they would have needed to know to fill them with courage was that it was the will of God for them to go. They lacked faith in God, and therefore they lacked courage. In contrast with the conduct of the other spies, Caleb says of himself, "But I wholly followed Jehovah my God." Caleb was not boasting when he said that he had wholly followed Jehovah his God; he was merely stating facts. He had evidence besides his own ideas to support that claim. As proof, he quoted what Moses said: "And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy foot hath trodden shall be an inheritance to thee and to thy children for ever, because thou hast wholly followed Jehovah my God." Thirty-seven or thirty-eight years after the spies made their report and the people rebelled, Moses quotes Jehovah as saying on that occasion, "Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see the good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it; and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed Jehovah." (Deut. 1: 35, 36.) In reading about Caleb one is impressed with

the repeated statements that he wholly followed Jehovah. Caleb received these special blessings and considerations because he did wholly follow Jehovah. It has been said that the promise to give Canaan to Abraham and to his seed after him was an unconditional promise; and yet the record shows plainly that about two millions of Abraham's seed failed to even enter Canaan because of their sins. The land Caleb desired was still in the hands of the enemy; at least a part of it was. Caleb wanted Joshua to know that he did not intend to shirk any responsibility; that, though he was eighty-five years of age, he was still able to do a man's part. Though he was eighty-five years old, he could truthfully say, "As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, and to go out and to come in." He did not, on account of his age, plead for an easy place. He recognized God's providence in keeping him alive so as to fulfill to him the promise. With gratitude for God's goodness he was ready with unabated zeal and strength to go on with the war. He was a remarkable man; old in years, and yet in the full vigor of manhood—a man strong in body, in mind, in faith, and in courage. Viewed from any angle, he was as good as the best.

Caleb's Request (Verse 12)

Caleb had mentioned his faithfulness and his strength as a basis for the plea he now makes: "Now therefore give me this hill-country, whereof Jehovah spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakim were there, and cities great and fortified." He knew the land and the people—their great stature, their fortified cities, and their skill in war had not frightened him. While some had been driven out, some remained; and Caleb was fully aware of the task that lay before him in clearing the land of the remaining enemies. What we have learned of him forbids our thinking him a visionary enthusiast, willing to undertake what he could not accomplish. He would go against them, relying on the strength of Jehovah. Modestly he said, "It may be that Jehovah will be with me, and I shall drive them out, as Jehovah spake." He knew the strength of the enemy, but he also knew that Jehovah in whom he trusted was stronger than they. He made no boast as to what he could do in his own strength. His confidence was in Jehovah, not in himself. He knew that if Jehovah was with him, victory was assured before the fight began. But he knew also that Jehovah would not give him the victory if he did not do his part. Jehovah is not with the man who sits and wishes; he is with the man who wills and works, as he directs.

Caleb's Request Granted (Verses 13-15)

"And Joshua blessed him"—that is, he either praised him or invoked the blessings of God upon him, or both. He would certainly pray that Caleb might be blessed in his efforts to take the land. "And he gave Hebron unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance." With Hebron went the smaller towns surrounding Hebron; Debir, one of the towns, was rather an important town; but Hebron was the chief city of the section given to Caleb. And this section was in the territory which was allotted to the tribe of Judah,

the tribe to which Caleb belonged. Hebron was formerly called Kiriath-arba, which means the city of Arba. A little added bit of interesting history of Caleb and his possession is told in chapter fifteen, verses thirteen to nineteen. It appears that Debir was considered a difficult city to take. It was formerly called Kiriath-sepher. "And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kiriath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife." That offer was certain to procure for his daughter a man of ability. "And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife."

SOME REFLECTIONS

A keen sense of duty and responsibility gives courage even to a timid man. The thing that gave courage in a marked degree to Caleb and Joshua was their faith in Jehovah and their high sense of duty and their feeling of responsibility.

Jehovah's blessings come to those who are prepared for them. Hebron as a gift would have been worth nothing to the cowards who rebelled at going into Canaan to take possession of the land. Heaven would be a place of misery to the person who delights in sin and debauchery.

Men of faith and courage are the only worth-while men in this world of ours. Timeservers, schemers, tricksters, and cowards may appear for a time to be rendering a public service; but a real test reveals what they are.

In this connection the following passages are worthy of serious reflection: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope." (Rom. 15: 4.) Concerning those who came out of Egypt and were baptized unto Moses and miraculously watered and fed by the Lord, Paul says, "Howbeit with most of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted." (1 Cor. 10: 5, 6.) "Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. 10: 11, 12.)

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

What it means to wholly follow the Lord.
The value to us of Old Testament examples.
The conquest of Canaan.
The need of faith and courage today.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
Give some facts about Gilgal.
Where do we first learn of Caleb?

Tell what he did in connection with the report the spies made?
Why did he not side with the majority?
Would you have done as Caleb did?
What did the congregation want to do with him and Joshua?
What then did Jehovah say to the people?

Verse 6

How long had the war lasted when the land was divided?
 Why did Caleb come to Joshua?
 Why did the men of Judah come with him?

Verses 7-11

How old was Caleb when sent as a spy?
 What age was he when they crossed the Jordan?
 How old was he when he came to Joshua?
 How do you figure that none who crossed the Jordan, expecting Caleb and Joshua, were over sixty years old?
 What did Caleb say about the other spies and himself?
 What had the other spies said that so discouraged the people?
 Why did the people lack courage?

What evidence besides his own ideas did Caleb have that he had wholly followed Jehovah?
 Why was Caleb favored by giving him a choice possession?
 What evidence did Caleb give that he was able to drive the enemy out of the land he desired?

Verse 12

What part of the land did Caleb ask for?
 What about the enemy?
 On what condition did he think he could drive out the enemy?

Verses 13-15

"And Joshua blessed him"—what does that mean?
 Caleb's possession would be in the territory of which tribe?
 What peculiar promise did Caleb make to the one who would take Debir?
 Who was the successful man?
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson III—July 17, 1938

DEBORAH: EMERGENCY LEADERSHIP

Judges 4: 1-9, 12-14

1 And the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, when Ehud was dead.

2 And Jehovah sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles.

3 And the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.

4 Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, she judged Israel at that time.

5 And she dwelt under the palm-tree of Deborah between Ramah and Beth-el in the hill-country of Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.

6 And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali, and said unto him, Hath not Jehovah, the God of Israel, commanded, saying, Go and draw unto mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun?

7 And I will draw unto thee, to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thy hand.

8 And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, I will not go.

9 And she said, I will surely go with thee; notwithstanding, the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honor; for Jehovah will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh.

12 And they told Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor.

13 And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles, unto the river Kishon.

14 And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which Jehovah hath delivered Sisera into thy hand; is not Jehovah gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esth. 4: 14.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 46: 1-3, 8-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

July 11.	M.	Israel's Distress (Judges 4: 1-3)
July 12.	T.	Deborah's Prophecy (Judges 4: 4-9)
July 13.	W.	Deborah's Leadership (Judges 4: 12-14)
July 14.	T.	Esther's Call (Esth. 4: 10-14)
July 15.	F.	Lydia's Leadership (Acts 16: 11-15)
July 16.	S.	Womanhood Glorifying God (Luke 1: 46-55)
July 17.	S.	God Our Helper (Psalm 46: 1-11)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—According to Usher, 1296 B.C.; according to Hales, 1406 B.C.

Places.—Deborah's home, between Ramah and Bethel; Barak lived in Kedesh, in the territory of Naphtali. Here Barak assembled his army. From there he went to Mount Tabor to await an opportune time for battle. The battle was fought in the plain at the foot of Tabor.

Persons.—Deborah, Barak and his army, and Sisera and his army.

Lesson Links.—When Joshua neared the end of his life, he secured a pledge from the people that they would serve Jehovah. (Josh. 24: 4-24.) "And the people served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of Jehovah that he had wrought for Israel. (Judges 2: 7.) When they did evil in the sight of Jehovah, and forsook him to serve other gods. "And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that despoiled them; and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. . . . And Jehovah raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those that despoiled them. . . . And when Jehovah raised them up judges, then Jehovah was with the judge, and saved them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge." (Judges 2: 14-18.) But as soon as the judge who delivered them died, they did worse than they had done before. This was repeated with disappointing regularity. "And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel; and he said, Because this nation have transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice; I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations that Joshua left when he died; that by them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of Jehovah to walk therein." (Judges 2: 20-22.) The first of the judges raised up to deliver Israel from their enemies was Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. Because of their forsaking Jehovah, they had been subdued by the king of Mesopotamia, whom they served eight years before Othniel delivered them. When Othniel died after judging them forty years, they again turned away from Jehovah to serve other gods. This time they fell into the hands of the Moabites, whom they served till Ehud delivered them by slaying the king in his own room. The student should read carefully the first three chapters of Judges. It seems that God's people did not remain true to him longer than a generation at any one time.

It might seem to some that they were so weak and rebellious that Jehovah would have discarded them entirely; but he was working out his great plan for redemption through Christ, and the children of Israel were the best material he had to work with. None of the other nations served him at all.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Israel Subdued by Jabin King of Canaan (Verses 1-3)

"And the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah." This expression in connection with the conduct of the children of Israel occurs with such frequency as to make us realize something of the frailties of human beings. It seems that they would have learned from experience that they fell into the hands of an enemy every time they fell away from Jehovah. Shamgar had but recently delivered them from the Philistines. As it is said that Jehovah sold them into the hands of Jabin, king of Canaan, after Ehud died, it would seem that Shamgar delivered them from the Philistines after Ehud became too old to engage actively in judging and leading the children of Israel, and that Shamgar did not really become judge. The children of Israel likely began to fall away from Jehovah after Ehud became too old to actively direct them, and they sank deeper into sin after he died. Then Jabin, king of Canaan, subdued them. Hazor, king Jabin's capital city, was in the territory allotted to the tribe of Naphtali. The captain of his hosts was Sisera, whose city, Harosheth, was in the territory allotted to Zebulun. It was still in the hands of the Gentiles. Jabin was a tyrant—"twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel." Through Moses Jehovah had said, "Because thou servedst not Jehovah thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things; therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies that Jehovah shall send against thee." (Deut. 28: 47, 48.) But each time the oppression of their enemies brought them to their senses; but it required twenty years of Jabin's bitter oppression to make them realize their need of Jehovah. Then they cried unto Jehovah. Jehovah heard their cry, as he always did when his people in their distress turned to him.

Deborah as Judge (Verses 4, 5)

Deborah was both a prophetess and a judge. She was an inspired teacher. It is likely that she was a judge merely by force of circumstances. As the people learned that she spoke by inspiration, they would naturally turn to her for instruction and advice, and to have her settle their disputes. It is not at all likely that Jabin would allow any man of Israel to perform any public functions. Besides, he may not have held such complete sway over Deborah's section of the country as he did over Zebulun and Naphtali. At least, it does not seem that he interfered with her activities. "And she dwelt under the palm-tree of Deborah between Ramah and Beth-el in the hill-country of Ephraim." For "dwelt" the marginal reading has "sat." Leeser, a learned Jew, translates it thus: "And she held her sitting under the palm-tree of Deborah." It was her place for

holding court. Here the people came to her for judgment. She was a woman of great wisdom and force of character, and yet she seems to have been entirely free from official arrogance and pride. She would be kept busy in the most exacting and trying of all service.

An Emergency.—Deborah was raised up to meet an emergency. When men will not lead, or cannot lead, and some good woman can lead, it falls to her lot to do so. It is evident that there was no man willing, or able, to take the lead at that time. They cried to Jehovah, but no man made a move to do anything about it. When Barak was called by Deborah to lead the army in battle, he did not want to do so, and would not agree to assume full responsibility in the matter. In her song of praise for the victory over Sisera and his army, Deborah said, "The rulers ceased in Israel, they ceased, until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel." Thus did Deborah herself acknowledge that she was called into leadership because the rulers of Israel failed. It is a shame and a pity that the men of a nation make it necessary for a mother in Israel to settle their troubles and lead them to victory against their enemies. And so, instead of being just a mother in Israel, Deborah had to be a mother to Israel, and had to bear the burdens that rightfully belonged to men. But no one would take the lead till this mother in Israel arose. She had the approval of Jehovah, else she would not have been an inspired prophetess. The incident shows that a woman must take the lead, if she be able to do so, when no man can, or will, take the lead; but the example warrants a woman to take the lead only in such an emergency.

Barak Called to Lead Israel in War (Verses 6, 7)

Nothing can be done for the redemption of people so long as they are satisfied with what they have; but Israel was growing tired of being oppressed. Israel was tired of Jabin's oppression, and was ready to serve Jehovah and to rely upon him. Either by inspiration or by observation, Deborah knew that the time for action had come. "And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali." God had so directed her, as is evident from what she said to Barak. Consult the map, and you will see that Deborah had to send quite a distance for a man to lead in the war with Jabin. When Barak came, she said to him, "Hath not Jehovah, the God of Israel, commanded, saying, Go and draw unto mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun?" There is reason for collecting an army from these two tribes. Hazor, Jabin's capital city, was in the territory allotted to Naphtali; Harosheth, Sisera's home city, was in the territory allotted to Zebulun. The territories of Naphtali and Zebulun were adjoining territories. As the king's city was in Naphtali and his chief captain's city was in Zebulun, these tribes would suffer worse than the other tribes from foraging by Sisera and his army, and would therefore be most anxious to throw off Jabin's yoke. Of course the army would go out and take whatever supplies they needed, and make it exceedingly hard on the people within easy reach of foraging parties. Barak was commanded to gather his army, and bring it to Mount Tabor. On that mountain they could organize and get ready for the battle, for Sisera would

not attack him on that mountain. His nine hundred chariots of iron could not be used in battle on that mountain. Barak would wait for Sisera's army to move into the valley of the Kishon River, and at an opportune time descend upon them. Kishon, next to the river Jordan, is the most important river in Palestine, rising far back toward the Jordan, and flowing in a winding, northeasterly direction through the beautiful valley of Esdraelon and emptying into the Mediterranean Sea north of Mount Carmel. Multiplied thousands of men have been slain in the many battles that have been fought on the plains along that river. Conditions were such that Barak would be compelled to gather and move his army in the greatest of secrecy. The army had to be gathered and on Mount Tabor before the enemy knew what was up. Jehovah added, "And I will draw unto thee, to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thy hand." This should have been all the assurance Barak needed.

Deborah Agrees to Go with Barak to War (Verses 8, 9)

Barak refused to go unless Deborah would go with him. Jehovah's assurance was not enough. He showed a lack of faith, and he was almost guilty of outright rebellion. He was naming the conditions on which he would do what Jehovah had commanded; but even so, he was doubtless the best man that could be found for the work to be done, and Jehovah was using the best material he had. But Barak should have known that Jehovah would fulfill his word without Deborah's presence. The crisis was great, and Deborah promptly agreed to go. She did not stop to consider her own comfort and safety, for she was willing to do what she could to free her people from Jabin's intolerable tyranny. However, she uttered a prophecy concerning the outcome of the war that showed that Jehovah was not pleased with Barak's attitude. "The journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honor; for Jehovah will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." By reading verses seventeen to twenty-two the reader will see how Sisera met death at the hands of a woman. Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh where they gathered an army of ten thousand men. It is strange that they could gather an army within something like an hour's walk from the city of the king, and he not know anything about it.

Sisera's Army Routed (Verses 12-14)

Barak was on Mount Tabor with his army before Sisera knew anything about it. When he was told about it, he "gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him." It was a great army well equipped. Barak had to go against that army with ten thousand poorly equipped men, but Jehovah was on his side. When Sisera marched his army along the plains near Mount Tabor, Deborah said to Barak, "Up; for this is the day in which Jehovah hath delivered Sisera into thy hand; is not Jehovah gone out before thee?" Deborah had a way of making statements in the form of a question. To know that Jehovah had gone out before them would encourage Barak and his army in the battle. Sisera would not expect Barak to come down and fight him

in the open plain, so Barak had the advantage of a surprise attack. From statements in Deborah's song of victory, it seems that a storm broke in upon them as the assault was made. This is borne out by the testimony of Josephus, who tells us that the wind and the rain beat in the faces of Sisera and his army so that they could not see to fight, but that it did not hinder the Hebrews, for it was against their backs. The horses to the chariots stampeded, and did great damage to Sisera's army. Many of his men perished in the swollen waters of the Kishon. So testifies Josephus. "Sisera alighted from his chariot, and fled away on his feet." His army was completely destroyed, and the yoke of Jabin was broken.

SOME REFLECTIONS

When people fall away from God they fall into the hands of an enemy.

With the Lord numbers do not count, but faithfulness does. He can save by one or by many.

Israel became weak and helpless when they adopted the religion of others. They then became an easy prey to their enemies. Be warned by their example.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

God's promises and threats to the Jews.

How Israel suffered for not driving out all the nations.

No man can serve two masters.

When must women take the lead?

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

How long did the people keep the pledge made to Joshua?
What evil did they repeatedly do?
What did Jehovah do about it?
How were they delivered?
How did Jehovah test them?
What judge delivered them first, and from whom?

Verses 1-3

What did Israel do again?
Who had last delivered them, and from whom?
Who was Jabin, and what did he do to the children of Israel?
What and where was Jabin's capital city?
Who was his chief captain, and where did he live?
How long did Jabin's bitter oppression last?

Verses 4, 5

Who and what was Deborah?
Where did Deborah hold court?
Why was Deborah in the lead?
In her song of victory, what did she say of herself?

What does the incident prove as to the duty of women?

Verses 6, 7

Whom did Deborah call, and where did he live?
What did she say to Barak?
Why would Zebulun and Naphtali suffer worse than the other tribes?
Where was Barak to collect an army, and to what point lead it?
What valley and what river was near Mount Tabor?
What did Jehovah say he would do?

Verses 8, 9

What did Barak say about going to war?
How did Deborah show her unselfish courage?
What did she prophesy concerning the outcome of the war?
How was this prophecy fulfilled?

Verses 12-14

When did Sisera learn of Barak's movements?
What did he do about it?
What equipments did Sisera have for war?
Where did he march with his army?
What did Deborah say to Barak?
What was the outcome of the battle?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IV—July 24, 1938

GIDEON: FOLLOWING GOD'S PLAN

Judges 7: 4-7, 15-23

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

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

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

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

15 And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped; and he returned into the camp of Israel, and said, Arise; for Jehovah hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian.

16 And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put into the hands of all of them trumpets, and empty pitchers, with torches within the pitchers.

17 And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise; and, behold, when I come to the outermost part of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do.

18 When I blow the trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, For Jehovah and for Gideon.

19 So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outermost part of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch, when they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake in pieces the pitchers that were in their hands.

20 And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the torches in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands wherewith to blow; and they cried, The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon.

21 And they stood every man in his place round about the camp; and all the host ran; and they shouted, and put them to flight.

22 And they blew the three hundred trumpets, and Jehovah set every man's sword against his fellow, and against all the host; and the host fled as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath.

23 And the men of Israel were gathered together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after Midian.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage.” (Josh. 1: 9.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 98: 1-6.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

July 18.	M.	God's Plan (Judges 7: 4-7)
July 19.	T.	Gideon's Assurance (Judges 7: 15-18)
July 20.	W.	“The Sword of Jehovah and of Gideon” (Judges 7: 19-23)
July 21.	T.	Disobedience and Weakness (Amos 2: 9-15)
July 22.	F.	Obedience and Strength (Josh. 1: 5-9)
July 23.	S.	Lifting Hands Heavenward (Ex. 17: 8-13)
July 24.	S.	Praise to God for Victories (Psalm 98: 1-6)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—According to Usher, 1245 B.C.; according to Hales, 1359 B.C. It has been forty-seven years since the children of Israel were delivered from the tyranny of Jabin by Deborah and Barak, for the land

then had rest forty years and they had been oppressed by the Midianites seven years.

Places.—Gideon and his army "encamped beside the spring of Harod: and the camp of Midian was on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley" of Jezreel.

Persons.—Jehovah, Gideon and his army, and the hosts of Midian. Chapter six, verse thirty-three, says, "Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east assembled themselves together." It seems therefore that the army of the Midianites was composed of a mixed multitude.

Lesson Links.—The children of Israel had rest forty years after they were delivered from Jabin. (Judges 5: 31.) But they would not remain true to Jehovah. "And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah: and Jehovah delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years." The Midianites were descendants of Abraham by Keturah. (Gen. 25: 1, 2.) They were a greedy, predatory race, gaining much of their living by plundering any people they could overcome. It seems that after they had subdued Israel, they made a habit of moving in on them during every harvest season. "And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance in Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle and their tents; they came in as locusts for multitude; both they and their camels were without number: and they came into the land to destroy it. And Israel was brought very low because of Midian; and the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah." In their prosperity the children of Israel forgot Jehovah; in their adversity they called upon him. To prepare them for deliverance from Midian, the Lord sent a prophet among them to point out to them the reason for their distressed condition, and to show them the right way. This prophet reminded them that Jehovah had told them long ago what would happen to them if they forsook him and went after other gods. Now the only way to cure their troubles was to return to Jehovah. Any nation that eliminates God from its affairs is headed toward destruction.

Gideon's Call.—Gideon the son of Joash, of Ophrah, was beating out wheat in the wine press to hide it from the Midianites, when an angel of Jehovah appeared to him and said to him, "Jehovah is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." As they were in such distress, Gideon could not see how the Lord was with him; but Jehovah told him to go in his might and save Israel. After many preliminaries, Gideon gathered an army, and they "encamped beside the spring of Harod: and the camp of Midian was on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley."

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Gideon's Army Reduced to Three Hundred (Verses 4-6)

It is impossible to get the lesson of Gideon if we confine ourselves to the printed text. The lesson really includes chapters six, seven, and eight; the student should read carefully these chapters. At first Gideon had an army of thirty-two thousand. The law required certain preliminaries before going into battle. (Deut. 20: 1-9.) The

priest was to speak words of encouragement to the army. Then officers were to announce to the army that any one might return home, who had built a new house and had not dedicated it, or who had planted a vineyard and had not eaten of its fruit, or who had betrothed a wife and had not married her. Especially were the fearful and faint-hearted to return home, lest they discourage the others. In Gideon's army there were twenty-two thousand who were afraid to face the Midianites. That left him an army of ten thousand. "And Jehovah said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many." He wanted the army so reduced in numbers that they could not say, "Mine own hand hath saved me." So, by Jehovah's orders and according to his directions, there was to be another sifting at a certain water—perhaps at the spring by which they were encamped. The fifth verse is obscure as to how the test for the fighting men was to be applied, for men cannot lap water with their tongue as a dog laps; but verse six clears up the matter. "And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men." They lifted the water to their mouth as a dog lifts it with his tongue. Perhaps these were selected to go to the battle, because their method of drinking showed alertness. A man who is likely to be assaulted by an enemy would not care to bow down on his knees with his face against the water. Lifting the water to the mouth with the hand showed a habit of watchfulness; it showed the way they had trained themselves. Men show their training and habits of thought in many ways without being conscious of it. The men did not know that Jehovah was testing them—only Gideon knew it.

Jehovah to Save Israel by the Three Hundred (Verse 7)

"By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you." Jehovah would save them from the Midianites, but he would do it by the three hundred. Even then the three hundred had to follow his plans—they had to comply with the conditions he laid down. It is a mistaken and hurtful notion, that because Jehovah saves, people therefore have nothing to do, or that because a man tries to do what God says, he is therefore trying to save himself independent of God. God saves through agencies and by means. To do exactly what God says to reach a certain end is to show the very highest degree of trust in God. For a man to turn from God's way to follow his own way is to trust himself instead of God. God would save Israel if they would do as he commanded. A failure to do God's will had got them into all their troubles. Through the prophet God said to them, "But ye have not hearkened unto my voice." (Judges 6: 10.) If they would reverse their conduct and do as he directed, he would save them and deliver the Midianites into their hands.

A Prophetic Dream (Verse 15)

Read verses nine to fourteen. It appears that the Midianites had moved in on the children of Israel, with their families and their stock. The armed men would encamp around the others for protection. At the command of Jehovah Gideon went with his servant "unto the outermost part of the armed men that were in the camp." It was night, and the multitude were asleep. Gideon approached

near enough to one of the tents to hear a man telling a dream to another, and heard the other interpret the dream. A barley loaf had come tumbling into the camp, struck a tent, and turned it upside down. The other said, "This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: into his hand God hath delivered Midian, and all the host." Both the dream and its interpretation were inspired; and yet these were heathen men. But the dream and its interpretation encouraged Gideon, and that was the reason for the Lord's having Gideon to spy on them. The incident filled Gideon with confidence, and he worshiped Jehovah. Returning immediately to his camp, he aroused his three hundred men, saying, "Arise; for Jehovah hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian." The outcome was so sure that Gideon spoke of it as already accomplished.

Gideon Organizes and Distributes the Three Hundred Men (Verses 16-18)

"And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put into the hands of all of them trumpets, and empty pitchers, with torches within the pitchers." Gideon placed himself at the head of one of the companies; of course the other two companies would have each one a leader. What a strange equipment for a battle—each soldier with a pitcher in one hand and a trumpet in the other! No such equipment could have originated in the mind of man. It is therefore evident that Gideon was divinely guided in so equipping his men. These three companies could be so placed as to be on all sides of the camp of the enemy, and verse twenty-one shows that they did that very thing. These companies would have to be arranged about the camp with the greatest caution and secrecy; otherwise the plan would fail. Every man was to watch for Gideon's signal. The pitchers were to be broken so as to display the lights and the trumpets were to be sounded. "When I blow the trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, For Jehovah and for Gideon." The sudden blast of trumpets on every side of the sleeping Midianites would rouse them from their slumbers, and cause them to think that these trumpets were giving signals to a vast army. They would naturally think that there was a company of men to each trumpeter. Being so suddenly aroused from sleep in the dead hours of the night by such a demonstration, and seeing the lights all about them, they would be thrown into the widest confusion. They would think that a great army was closing in on them from every side.

The Midianites Routed and Destroyed (Verses 19-23)

As the other two companies were to do as Gideon and his men did, it would be necessary for Gideon and his company to take their stand where the others could see their torches. The Midianites were in total ignorance of what was going on. When the three hundred men under Gideon had time to arrange themselves in their respective places, then suddenly on all sides of the camp of the Midianites trumpets were sounded, as if each were giving a signal for a charge. Then the pitchers were broken, and suddenly torches flared up on

every side of the camp of the Midianites, and they heard the shout, "The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon." Before the Midianites could be sufficiently awake to think, panic seized them; they had no time nor inclination to arrange themselves in battle formation. They were too frightened to think. A vast host of people in a panic do not think; they do not stop to reason; they are more unmanageable than a stampeded herd of cattle. As they rushed about in the darkness of the night, unable to distinguish friend from foe, each man that was met was supposed to be an enemy, and so the Midianites made a very great slaughter among themselves. "Jehovah set every man's sword against his fellow, and against all the host." Every Midianite that escaped the sword of his fellow man made an attempt to flee from the land of the children of Israel. They did not have any order in their flight. Three of the tribes of Israel joined in pursuing them. They sought to head off the Midianites by spreading out along the river Jordan. Gideon followed some of them across the Jordan near Succoth, a town on the east side of the Jordan in the territory of the tribe of Gad; but the men of Succoth and Penuel were neutral; that is, they professed to be neutral. They were not sure that Gideon would win the fight. After capturing the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, Gideon returned by way of Succoth, and used rather drastic means to teach the elders of that city a much needed lesson. When Gideon returned from his great victory, "then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also; for thou hast saved us out of the hand of Midian. And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: Jehovah shall rule over you."

SOME REFLECTIONS

The only thing that ever caused the children of Israel to have serious trouble was their own departures from Jehovah. They forgot Jehovah times without number.

The fathers and the mothers and all who have any dealings with growing boys and girls should do what they can to cultivate in them a feeling of personal responsibility to God. If people grow up without that feeling of responsibility to God, all the laws that can be made will not stop crime.

When a nation's educational institutions eliminate God from their program of education, as many of our schools and colleges and universities are doing, they are sowing the seeds of national destruction. As it happened to Israel, so will it happen to other nations.

Destruction of faith always brought ruin to Israel, and a revival of faith brought success and prosperity and peace. Faith is both a shield and a mighty power. Gideon is one of the heroes mentioned in Heb. 11: 32-34, "who through faith subdued kingdoms." He relied on Jehovah and conquered. "For there is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few." (1 Sam. 14: 6.)

A man may do a great work, and then spoil much, or all, of the good he has done. After Gideon had made such a complete destruction of the Midianites that they disappeared entirely from history, and after refusing to be made king, he illegally made a great ephod of gold, which they all worshiped. Even the strong are frail.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

How 1 Cor. 1: 27 is illustrated in the method by which the Midianites were destroyed.

How Isaiah's language in chapter one, verse three, is true of many today.

What lesson we may learn from the effort of Succoth and Penuel to be neutral.

Why Gideon's neighbors first wanted to kill him. (Judges 6: 25-32.)

How the example of Gideon may be made valuable to us.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Who delivered Israel, as told in our last lesson?

How long did the land have rest?

Who then conquered Israel?

From whom did these people descend?

How did they make their living?

How and to what extent did they oppress Israel?

What brought these afflictions on the children of Israel?

Why did the Lord send a prophet to them?

What did the prophet tell them?

Tell about Gideon's call.

Verses 4-6

How many men did Gideon first have in his army?

What did the law require of officers before going into battle?

How many left Gideon's army, and how many remained?

What did Jehovah then say?

Why did Jehovah want so few in Gideon's army?

By what method was the army again reduced?

How many remained?

Can you see any significance in the method of testing the men?

Verse 7

How would Jehovah save Israel?

If Jehovah saves, does that mean that we do nothing as conditions? Tell how we really show our trust in God.

Can a man trust God and disobey him at the same time?

Verse 15

Were the Midianites an army, or an armed encampment?

Tell about the Midianite's dream, and how came Gideon to hear it?

What did Gideon say when he returned to his own camp?

Verses 16-18

Tell how Gideon organized and distributed his three hundred men.

Tell about their equipment.

What shows that Gideon was divinely directed to so equip his men?

What were they to do with such equipment?

Verses 19-23

At a given signal, what were Gideon's men to do?

What effect did this have on the Midianites, and why?

Which way did the Midianites flee?

Tell about Gideon's pursuit of them.

When Gideon returned home, what occurred?

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson V—July 31, 1938

SAMSON: STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS

Judges 14: 5, 6; 15: 11-14; 16: 15-21

5 Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnah, and came to the vineyards of Timnah: and, behold, a young lion roared against him.

6 And the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid; and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.

11 Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers

over us? what then is this that thou hast done unto us? And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them.

12 And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves.

13 And they spake unto him, saying, No; but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand; but surely we will not kill thee. And they bound him with two new ropes, and brought him up from the rock.

14 When he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted as they met him; and the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him, and the ropes that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his hands dropped from off his hands.

15 And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thy heart is not with me? thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth.

16 And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, that his soul was vexed unto death.

17 And he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon my head; for I have been a Nazirite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.

18 And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath told me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought the money in their hand.

19 And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and shaved off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him.

20 And she said, The Philistines are upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times, and shake myself free. But he knew not that Jehovah was departed from him.

21 And the Philistines laid hold on him, and put out his eyes; and they brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison-house.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might.” (Eph. 6: 10.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Eccles. 12: 1-7.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

July 25. M.	Stronger Than a Lion (Judges 14: 5, 6)
July 26. T.	Stronger Than Ropes (Judges 15: 11-14)
July 27. W.	Weak as Other Men (Judges 16: 15-21)
July 28. T.	Weakness of the Flesh (Matt. 26: 40-45)
July 29. F.	When the Weak Are Strong (2 Cor. 12: 7-10)
July 30. S.	Weak Things Stronger Than Mighty (1 Cor. 1: 22-29)
July 31. S.	Strong in the Lord (Eph. 6: 10-13)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Samson's activities cover the period from 1145 or 1140 B.C. to 1125 or 1120 B.C.

Places.—Timnah, the rock Etam, and the valley of Sorek.

Persons.—Samson, his father and mother, the men of Judah, Delilah, and the Philistines.

Lesson Links.—“And the land had rest forty years in the days of Gideon.” (Judges 8: 28.) Verses 33-35: “And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and played the harlot after the Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god. And the children of Israel remembered not Jehovah their God, who had delivered them out of the hand of all their enemies on

every side; neither showed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had showed unto Israel." Though Gideon had told the people that neither he nor his son would rule over them, his son Abimelech by his concubine at Shechem, by the help of some of the men of Shechem, slew all his brethren, and became king, and reigned three years. After Abimelech was killed, numerous judges arose, the most noted of whom was Jephthah. The story of this impulsive man is told in the eleventh and twelfth chapters. After him arose other judges of less note. "And the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah; and Jehovah delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years." (Judges 13: 1.) Manoah, of the tribe of Dan, lived at Zorah, "and his wife was barren, and bare not." An angel appeared to Manoah's wife, and told her that she should bare a son. In the meantime, she was to drink neither wine nor strong drink, and to eat no unclean thing; "for the child shall be a Nazirite." The Nazirite vow is described in Num. 6: 1-21. It does not seem that Moses established the vow, but merely gave regulations to a custom that was already in vogue. Either a man or a woman might take the Nazirite vow for any length of time they chose; but Samson was to be a Nazirite from birth. The Nazirite was to drink no wine nor strong drink, nor was he to eat any part of the grape. Hence, so far as intoxicating liquors were concerned, Samson was to be a total abstainer. And a person was to let his hair grow so long as the vow was upon him. Samson had what might be called a peculiar form of inspiration—it gave him superhuman strength. On a visit among the Philistines Samson "saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines." On returning home he said to his father and mother, "I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife." His father and mother sought to convince him that he should find a wife among his own race of people. But Samson said, "Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well." At first glance this statement seems to mean that the woman was just the woman that he wanted for a wife and to be the mother of his children; but was that it? She might please him because she fit in well with plans he had against the Philistines. This seems to be the true sense, for the next verse says, "But his father and his mother knew not that it was of Jehovah; for he sought an occasion against the Philistines." Plans were being laid for a one-man fight against the warlike Philistines, and in some way the woman Samson was to marry would furnish the occasion. The events connected with Samson's marriage to this woman show how the occasion was brought about.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Samson Marries a Woman of the Philistines (Verses 5, 6)

Samson's father and mother went down with him to see the woman whom he wished to have for a wife. The woman lived at Timnah, a border town between Judah and Dan. Then the people lived in the towns, and cultivated the territory in reach of the town. "The vineyards of Timnah" were the vineyards belonging to the people who lived in Timnah. It appears that Samson and his father and mother stopped to rest when they had reached the vineyards of

Timnah, and that Samson had strolled some distance from them; "and, behold, a young lion roared against him." The lion meant to make a feast of him. Evidently the lion made an attack upon him. "And the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid; and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done." The Spirit of God gave him supernatural strength. It seems that this incident served a double purpose. It showed Samson what he, aided by the Spirit of God, could do, and therefore gave him courage when he came into conflict with the Philistines. It also furnished the setting for the riddle which he presented to the Philistines at his wedding feast. When he went down to get the woman for his wife, he found that a swarm of bees had taken up their abode in the dried carcass of the lion, and he took some of their honey. At the marriage feast, which lasted seven days, he propounded this riddle to the thirty Philistines who had been invited to be his companions during the feast: "Out of the eater came forth food, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." If they interpreted the riddle, he would give them thirty linen garments and thirty changes of raiment; if they failed, they were to pay him thirty linen garments and thirty changes of raiment. As they could not unravel his riddle, they said to his wife, "Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire." After she had indulged in much pouting and weeping, Samson told her the riddle. She then told the Philistines. This, of course, angered Samson, and he said to them, "If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle." "And the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and smote thirty men of them, and took their spoil and gave the changes of raiment unto them that declared the riddle." But such treachery and deceit on the part of his wife so enraged him that he went back to his father's house, leaving his wife with her father. After a while Samson's anger cooled, and he went back to see his wife, only to find that her father had given her to Samson's companion to be his wife. This gave rise to the incident of the foxes and the firebrands. When the Philistines learned why Samson had burned up their grain and their olive yards, they burned up his wife and her father. Then Samson said to them, "If ye do after this manner, surely I will be avenged of you, and after that I will cease. And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter; and he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam." Etam was in the territory of the tribe of Judah, and evidently near Lehi.

Samson Bound to Be Delivered to the Philistines (Judges 15: 11-13)

An army of the Philistines followed after Samson, "and spread themselves in Lehi." The men of Judah said to them, "Why are ye come up against us?" It appears that the men of Judah had not heard of Samson's recent slaughter of so many Philistines. "To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us." An army had come to bind one man! And the men of Judah thought it would require an army to bind Samson, for three thousand went to his stronghold to bind him. "Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? what then is this that thou hast done unto

us?" The men of Judah were afraid that the Philistines would take revenge on the whole nation. Justice and reason were not prompting them in coming for Samson; they were moved by the emotion of fear, and any great emotion does not regard justice or reason. Hence, it did no good for Samson to say to them, "As they did unto me, so have I done unto them." So they informed him that they had come down to bind him and deliver him to the Philistines. Had it been the Lord's will for him to do so, Samson could have fought his way out; but he had no grudge against his own people, and did not want to do any of them any harm. Having exacted from them an oath that they would not fall upon him themselves, he suffered them to bind him to be delivered to the Philistines. It is likely that he was seeking an occasion to slaughter more of the Philistines. Samson did not make up excuses for fighting the Philistines, but always waited for the occasion to come from them. This would save his own people from being blamed by the Philistines, for matters always so turned out that it seemed to be a personal fight between Samson and the Philistines. And for Samson's own people to bind him and deliver him to the Philistines would show them plainly that his own people had nothing to do with his quarrel with the Philistines. It would also furnish Samson just the kind of opportunity that pleased him. He could carry on his own war without involving his nation. They bound him with two new ropes, evidently using one with which to bind his feet, the other to bind his hands. They would not risk old ropes. It does seem that they would have known that God was giving him that mighty strength, and that therefore it was useless to bind him with anything.

Samson Frees Himself (Verse 14)

When Samson was brought into Lehi, the Philistines shouted for joy. They felt sure that Samson would give them no more trouble, for they would soon take his life, or make a slave of him. But they also were ignorant of the source of Samson's great strength. Had they known that Jehovah the God of the universe was with him, they would have known that his being bound was the same as if he were not bound. Their rejoicing over Samson's plight was based on their ignorance, and was of short duration. "And the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him, and the ropes that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire." He broke the new ropes as if they were only the charred remains of ropes. But this fourteenth verse does not finish the incident. When the ropes fell from his hands he seized the fresh jawbone of an ass, "and smote a thousand men therewith." Even though he fought with God-given strength, the battle was exhausting, "and he was sore athirst, and called on Jehovah, and said, 'Thou hast given this great deliverance by the hand of thy servant; and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised.'" God made water to spring up from a hollow place that is in Lehi.

Samson Tells Delilah the Secret of His Strength (Judges 16: 15-17)

"And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah." She, too, was of the Philistines. Whether or not he made this woman his wife we are

not told. The lords of the Philistines promised her much money if she would induce Samson to tell wherein his great strength lay. They wanted to get him in their power. Delilah began her efforts to get from him the desired information, and three times he deceived her. Then she tried pouting and hypocritical tears—You do not love me. It is said that Samson loved her, but it is plain that she did not love him. However, her pouting and tears brought results. Samson told her what would rob him of his strength. It is strange that any man would be so simple-minded as Samson showed himself to be on this occasion. His strength was not in his hair; God was the source of his strength, and God was with him so long as he remained a Nazirite. To have his hair cut off was to violate that vow.

Samson Is Bound and Tortured by the Philistines (Verses 18-21)

Samson should have known that Delilah had some bad motive in wanting to know the secret of his strength, for that knowledge would not enable her to be any help to him; and yet her persistence showed that she had a deep underlying purpose. So, in his sleep, she had a man to shave his head; his Nazirite vow was broken; and though Samson did not at once know it, Jehovah departed from him; his strength was gone. The Philistines came in and bound him, and then put out his eyes and made a slave of him. As had been his strength, so was his folly; both were great. But through his entire career he had an abiding faith in Jehovah. He is mentioned in Heb. 11: 32-34 as one of the heroes who accomplished such great things through faith. His last words were a prayer to Jehovah for strength. (Verses 22-30.)

SOME REFLECTIONS

In one way Samson was wise and thoughtful. He was a one-man army making war against the Philistines; yet he managed every conflict so that it seemed to be only a personal matter between himself and the Philistines.

People read into the Bible things that are not in it, such as saying that Samson's strength was in his hair; whereas, Jehovah was his strength. When they shaved his head, his vow was broken, and then Jehovah departed from him. Drinking wine would have done the same thing.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The Nazirite vow.
The Philistines.
Samson's faith.
Samson's wisdom and folly.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings
Give time, places, and persons.

After Gideon's victory how long did the land have rest?
What did the children of Israel then do?
Tell about Abimelech.
Give the circumstances connected with the birth of Samson.

Give the requirements of the Naz-
irite vow.
Who had subdued the children of
Israel?
Tell about Samson and the woman
of Timnah.
What seems to be the reason he
wanted her for a wife?

Verses 5, 6

The vineyards of Timnah—to whom
did they belong?
Tell about the incidents of this
journey to Timnah.
How did Samson have such
strength?
Tell about the journey when Sam-
son went to make the woman his
wife.
Tell about the wedding feast and
Samson's riddle.
Tell how he lost, and how he paid
his wager.
What did Samson then do?
Tell what happened on his return
to see his wife.

Judges 15: 11-13

Why did the Philistines follow Sam-
son, and to what place?
How came the men of Judah to go
after Samson?
What pledge did Samson require of
the men of Judah?

How did Samson manage to keep
the Philistines from blaming his
own people for what he did to
them?
How was he bound by the men of
Judah?

Verse 14

What did the Philistines do when
they saw him coming to them
bound?
What did Samson do, and how did
he fight?
After the slaughter, what did he
say to Jehovah?
How was water provided for him?

Judges 16: 15-17

Who was Delilah?
Why did she try so hard to find out
the secret of Samson's strength?
How did she finally succeed?
What was the source of Samson's
strength?

Verses 18-21

How does the folly of Samson man-
ifest itself?
How did Delilah manage to have his
head shaved?
What then did the Philistines do to
him, and with him?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VI—August 7, 1938

RUTH: ADVENTUROUS FAITH

Ruth 1: 6-18

6 Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from
the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that
Jehovah had visited his people in giving them bread.

7 And she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daugh-
ters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of
Judah.

8 And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each of you to
her mother's house: Jehovah deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the
dead, and with me.

9 Jehovah grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her
husband. Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voice, and wept.

10 And they said unto her, Nay, but we will return with thee unto thy
people.

11 And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me?
have I yet sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?

12 Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have a
husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should even have a husband
to-night, and should also bear sons:

13 Would ye therefore tarry till they were grown? would ye therefore stay
from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your
sakes, for the hand of Jehovah is gone forth against me.

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 fol-
lowing 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.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."* (Ruth 1: 16.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 4: 1-8.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

August 1. M.	Ruth's Option (Ruth 1: 6-13)
August 2. T.	Ruth's Choice (Ruth 1: 14-18)
August 3. W.	Daring Faith (Dan. 3: 14-18)
August 4. T.	Enduring Faith (Heb. 11: 33-40)
August 5. F.	Working Faith (James 2: 18-24)
August 6. S.	The Victory of Faith (1 John 5: 1-5)
August 7. S.	Security in God (Psalm 4: 1-8)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—"When the judges judged." The exact date is not known. But consider this: According to Ruth 4: 21 David was the great-grandson of Boaz and Ruth. David was born about 1100 B.C., ten years after Saul became king. The incidents of our lesson occurred perhaps seventy-five or a hundred years before the birth of David, or between 1200 B.C. and 1175 B.C.

Place.—The land of Moab—the exact point is not named.

Persons.—Naomi and her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth.

Lesson Links.—From the last verse of the book, we can see that the book of Ruth was written after David had become king. Tradition favors Samuel as the writer; but do not the beauty of its language, its romance, and its poetic flavor suggest David as its author? The first verse shows that the incidents recorded occurred during the time of the judges. It seems to have been written as a connecting link between the Book of the Judges and First Samuel, and to fill in what would otherwise have been a gap in the line through which Christ was to come. The incidents of the book began with a famine in the land of Canaan. In announcing the curses that would come upon the children of Israel, if they disobeyed Jehovah, Moses said, "And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. Jehovah will make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed." "The fruit of thy ground, and all thy labors, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed away." (Deut. 28: 23, 24, 33.) They suffered from famine when their crops failed and when their enemies overran their country and carried away the products of their land and labor. "And it came to pass in the days when the judges judged, that there was a famine in the land." As an example of how their enemies brought famines to the land, read again the story of Gideon. It was because of a famine that "a certain man of Bethlehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem-judah." Elimelech died in the country of Moab, and the two sons "took them

wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelt there about ten years. And Mahlon and Chilion died both of them; and the woman was left of her two children and of her husband." At the time of our lesson, Bethlehem seems to have been rather an obscure village, but it later became famous as the birthplace of David and of Jesus the Christ. It is situated about six miles south of Jerusalem.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth Start to Bethlehem-judah (Verses 6, 7)

Concerning her leaving Bethlehem and her returning, Naomi said to her old friends, "Call me not Naomi (pleasant), call me Mara (bitter); for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and Jehovah hath brought me home again empty." To lose her husband and two sons would have been a bitter experience, even though she had been surrounded by her friends, but to be bereft of them amongst a people who were never friendly to the Hebrews added to the bitterness of the experience. Famines were brought upon the Hebrews as punishments for their departures from Jehovah. This family had left Bethlehem to escape such punishment, and had experienced things that were worse than a famine. Naomi's speech to her friends indicates that she had come to realize it. Her bereavements and destitution made her long for her old home; and, like the prodigal son, she decided to return. "Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that Jehovah had visited his people in giving them bread." If enemies had overrun the land and caused the famine, they had been driven out. If the country of Moab had not been such a land of sorrow to Naomi, she might not have returned. Some travelers had brought the report that the land of Canaan was again prosperous. Her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, started out with her on her home journey. We are not informed as to the point from which they started; but if they started from near the western border, it would be quite a journey for them to make on foot, as their poverty likely made it necessary for them to do.

Naomi Begs Orpah and Ruth to Return to Their People (Verses 8-10)

As they journeyed along, Naomi thought of the sad plight of her two daughters-in-law. They, the same as she, had been bereft of their husbands; but her life was mostly behind her; theirs mostly before them; she was returning to her old friends and kindred; they were leaving their own people to go among a different race of people—all strangers to them. They would be a comfort to her, but what could she promise them? And yet it would be a delicate matter to ask them to go back home. She loved them, and would not want them to think she merely wanted to rid herself of them. Few people could frame such a request in such choice words as did Naomi: "Go, return each of you to her mother's house: Jehovah deal kindly with you,

as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me." There was not a tinge of selfishness in that request. So many of us in giving advice allow our own interests to color our advice, but not so with Naomi. She would hate to be separated forever from her beloved daughters-in-law; but she was thinking of their good, not of her pleasure. She thought life would be easier for them among their own people than among strangers of another race. Naomi's prayer is beautiful in its simplicity and trust: "Jehovah deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. Jehovah grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband." It was a prayer that each of them might find a husband who would give them a home where peace and rest might be found. A more selfish person might have resented the idea that they might turn their hearts from the dead to other husbands. She loved Orpah and Ruth and knew that they would fare better with good husbands than if they remained widows, for poor widows had a hard row of it in those days. "Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voice, and wept." If Orpah and Ruth had intended to return, their hearts were now so touched by the unselfish devotion of Naomi that they vowed in their hearts never to leave her. "Nay, but we will return with thee unto thy people." One rarely finds such devotion—they loved Naomi more than their own mothers. Naomi was a wonderful woman, otherwise she could not have bound to her these daughters-in-law with such ties of love.

Naomi Continues Her Pleading (Verses 11-13)

It was the law among the Hebrews that if a married man died childless his brother should take his widow to wife. In her pleadings with Orpah and Ruth, Naomi had that law in mind. So she said to them, "Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? have I yet sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?" She was too old to have a husband; and even if she should marry again and bear sons, they could not wait for them to be their husbands. She was trying to show them that there was no satisfactory future for them, if they went with her. "Nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes, for the hand of Jehovah is gone forth against me." These were three lovely, unselfish women; Naomi so devoted to the two that she thought only of their welfare, the two so devoted to Naomi that they thought not at all of their future welfare. Such devotion between mother-in-law and daughters-in-law makes the mother-in-law jokes seem crude and out of place.

Orpah Yields—Ruth Refuses to Return (Verses 14-18)

Orpah yielded to Naomi's persuasion. It is singular that they went some distance before Naomi began her persuasion. Perhaps they started out as if they merely intended to comply with the usual custom of going some distance with a departing guest; and when Naomi found that they really intended to go on with her, she began to beg them to return. After much persuasion, Orpah decided to go back home. Then Naomi said a thing to Ruth that sounds queer, coming, as it did, from one who believed in Jehovah: "Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her god: return thou

after thy sister-in-law." Chemosh was the national god of the Moabites. It seems that Naomi shared the general idea of those times, that every nation had its god. She thought of Jehovah as the God of the Hebrews and Chemosh as the god of the Moabites, and therefore that the proper thing for them to do was to return where they could worship their god. She would worship the God of her people, they could return where they could worship the god of their people. This idea that each nation, or race, had its god may have had a stronger hold on the Hebrews than we realize. If the children of Israel held this idea, which they most likely did, it is easier for us to see how they were so easily led into worshipping the gods of the nations whom they had failed to drive out of the land of Canaan. The heathen nations could persuade them that their gods were the gods of that land, and that Jehovah was a god foreign to that country. It is easy now for some people to persuade themselves that Jehovah is a sort of tribal, or racial, God, whose main interest centers in the Jews, and that it was never his purpose to bless any other people, except as they became subservient to the Jews. With the conception people had of gods in those days, it is easy to see how Naomi could, in her personal life, be devoted to the worship of Jehovah, and yet think other nations had their gods to whom they should be faithful. In no other way can we see how so good a woman as Naomi could so earnestly beg her beloved daughter-in-law to return to the worship of their god Chemosh. But Orpah's yielding to Naomi's persuasion did not break down Ruth's determination to cleave to her mother-in-law. She expressed her devotion to Naomi and her determination to be always with her, in language unsurpassed in beauty of sentiment and expression. "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; 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." Was a request ever denied in more courteous language, or was devotion ever expressed in choicer words? The beauty of the language is excelled only by the beauty of the sentiment. And how could words have been framed to express greater devotion to Naomi and greater faith in Jehovah? It conquered the resolute Naomi; she could say no more. "And when she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, she left off speaking unto her." She had exhausted her powers of persuasion. And who can doubt but that Naomi was glad in her heart that her daughter-in-law had gained her point and was thenceforth to be with her?

SOME REFLECTIONS

The idea that God is now in some special sense the God of the Jews is a perversion of New Testament teaching. God is not a mere tribal God. "Or is God the God of Jews only? is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yea, of Gentiles also: if so be that God is one." (Rom. 3: 29, 30.)

The study of the Old Testament characters is valuable to the Christian in many ways. We can be admonished both by their failures and by their successes, both by their devotion and by their lack of

devotion. The unselfishness of Naomi and the devotion of Ruth put to shame the selfishness and the indifference of many professed Christians.

If you like to read romance, read the book of Ruth; but read it in the light of the customs of that day. If you try to judge it in the light of present day customs, you will miss much of its beauty. And if you get to thinking that everybody is hard and selfish, and that no one does anything unless he has a selfish motive in doing it, study the character of Naomi. If there was any selfish motive in her efforts to have Orpah and Ruth to return to their own people, it is not discernible.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The Moabites and their religion.

Famine among the Hebrews and their causes.

Social customs in the time of the judges.

The three women of our lesson—a study in character.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

Who may have written the book of Ruth?

Why did famines come upon the Hebrews?

Why did Elimelech and family go to Moab?

Give account of what befell them there.

Who were Orpah and Ruth?

Why did Naomi decide to return to Bethlehem?

Tell about Bethlehem.

Verses 6, 7

How long did Naomi remain in Moab?

Who started with her to Bethlehem?

Of what nationality were these daughters-in-law?

Verses 8-10

Tell about Naomi's urging Orpah and Ruth to return to their people.

What did they say?

What is peculiar about their devotion to Naomi?

Show the unselfishness of Naomi.

Verses 11-13

What was the law of marriage?

On what grounds did Naomi urge Orpah and Ruth to return?

Which impresses you most, the unselfishness of Naomi or the devotion of Orpah and Ruth?

Verses 14-18

Which yielded to Naomi's persuasion?

What then did Naomi say to Ruth?

What is peculiar in what she said to Ruth?

What idea of gods did people then have?

Who was the god of the Moabites?

Repeat Ruth's final reply to Naomi's repeated urgings.

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VII—August 14, 1938

THE RELATION OF TEMPERANCE TO CHARACTER

Prov. 4: 10-23; 1 Thess. 5: 6-8

- 10 Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings;
 And the years of thy life shall be many.
 11 I have taught thee in the way of wisdom;
 I have led thee in paths of uprightness.
 12 When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened;
 And if thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.
 13 Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go:
 Keep her; for she is thy life.
 14 Enter not into the path of the wicked,
 And walk not in the way of evil men.
 15 Avoid it, pass not by it;
 Turn from it, and pass on.
 16 For they sleep not, except they do evil;
 And their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.
 17 For they eat the bread of wickedness,
 And drink the wine of violence.
 18 But the path of the righteous is as the dawning light,
 That shineth more and more unto the perfect day.
 19 The way of the wicked is as darkness:
 They know not at what they stumble.
 20 My son, attend to my words;
 Incline thine ear unto my sayings.
 21 Let them not depart from thine eyes;
 Keep them in the midst of thy heart.
 22 For they are life unto those that find them,
 And health to all their flesh.
 23 Keep thy heart with all diligence;
 For out of it are the issues of life.

6 So then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober.
 7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that are drunken are
 drunken in the night.
 8 But let us, since we are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate
 of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler; and
 whosoever erreth thereby is not wise.” (Prov. 20: 1.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 1.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

- | | | |
|------------|----|--|
| August 8. | M. | Wise Counsel (Prov. 4: 10-13) |
| August 9. | T. | Warnings Against Evil Associates (Prov. 4: 14-23) |
| August 10. | W. | Forming Good Habits (1 Thess. 5: 6-8) |
| August 11. | T. | Humility and Sobriety (1 Pet. 5: 5-10) |
| August 12. | F. | Sober-minded Leaders (Tit. 1: 5-9) |
| August 13. | S. | Sound Teaching (Tit. 2: 1-8) |
| August 14. | S. | The Righteous and Wicked Contrasted (Psalm 1: 1-6) |

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Solomon evidently wrote the book of Proverbs while he was king. He reigned forty years. Chronologists differ slightly as to the year in which he began to reign—according to Hales, 1030 B.C.; Oppert, 1017; Rawlinson and Usher, 1015; Calmet, 1010; Duncker, 993. As to the date of the writing of First Thessalonians, Hales gives the date as A.D. 49, but Usher's date is A.D. 54.

Places.—The book of Proverbs was written in Jerusalem; First Thessalonians was written at Corinth.

Persons.—Solomon wrote Proverbs. He frequently says, "My son," as if he were writing for the benefit of his son. Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica. Both books were intended to be of benefit to others.

Lesson Links.—The word temperance, in its original sense and the sense in which it is used in the Bible, means self-control; but unfortunately its meaning has been narrowed down till now it is used almost exclusively with reference to abstaining from the use of intoxicating liquors. But drinking intoxicating liquors is only one of the ways in which people can be intemperate. Liquor drinking is one of the major evils of today. Drunkenness has always been an evil. It takes from a man his earning capacity, and thus impoverishes him and his family. And it impoverishes him and his family still more by taking what little he earns to make him drunk again. It turns some otherwise decent people into cruel beasts—they starve their families and abuse them. And thus the innocent suffer at the hands of the guilty. And the drinker is a peril to the innocent now in a way that he formerly could not be. The automobile and the highway give him an additional opportunity to kill and to injure the innocent. If only the drunkard suffered from his drinking, it would not be so bad. Any way you look at it, drunkenness is a crime; and no person who has a decent regard for his family, for himself, and for his fellow man will become intoxicated.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

"Hear, O My Son" (Verses 10-12)

The contents of the book of Proverbs show that it was not written solely for the benefit of any one person. Solomon's proverbs were written "to give prudence to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion: that the wise man may hear, and increase in learning; and that the man of understanding may attain unto sound counsels." (Prov. 1: 4, 5.) In writing the Proverbs Solomon may have had especially in mind his own son, or his frequent use of the term, "my son," may have been a fatherly way of addressing all who might read his proverbs. The habits of life enjoined in the Proverbs tend to prolong life. Intemperate living and reckless conduct tend to shorten life. "Hear, O my son, and receive my savings; and the years of thy life shall be many." "Vice and intemperance impair the health and shorten the days of the wicked; while true religion, sobriety, and temperance, prolong them. The principal part of our diseases spring from indolence, intemperance, and disorderly passions. Religion excites to industry, promotes sober habits, and destroys evil passions, and harmonizes the soul; and thus, by preventing many diseases, necessarily prolongs life."—*Adam Clark*. "I have taught thee in the way of wisdom." It is one thing to have knowledge; it is another thing to have wisdom. Knowledge is made up of what we know about things; wisdom enables us to make proper use of that knowledge. Wisdom is tact, or skill. "I have led thee in paths of uprightness." Following the way of wisdom and keeping in the paths of uprightness is the only way to keep out of embarrassing situations and straitened circumstances. It keeps a person out of trouble. The person who is guided by folly and departs from the

paths of uprightness constantly finds himself in embarrassing circumstances, or in serious trouble. The noted criminals furnish a striking illustration of the fact that a departure from wisdom and uprightness gets one into all sorts of difficulties; but how different it is with the upright man. He indulges in no trickery and deceit. He can face his fellow man without embarrassment; he can converse freely with officers—they are his friends; he can lie down to sleep at night with no fear that he will be aroused to answer for a crime. The man who is guided by wisdom and lives an upright life does not fall into sin and shame.

"Take Fast Hold of Instruction" (Verses 13, 14)

Seize information—lay hold on the truth. "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the gaining of it is better than the gaining of silver, and the profit thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; and none of the things thou canst desire are to be compared unto her." (Prov. 3: 13-15.) The Bible is our guidebook, but it guides only those who know what it says; and the Bible yields its precious truths only to those who study it with an honest desire to know the will of God. There must be a hungering and thirsting for righteousness. (Matt. 5: 6.) And when you have learned the wisdom from God, "let her not go." Do not forget it—keep it fresh in mind by study; neither allow yourself to depart from it. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away." (Heb. 2: 1.) "Keep her." To keep the word of God means more than merely to retain it in memory. Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." (John 14: 21.) The only way these disciples could have his commandments was to have them in their minds, for they had not then been written down. Hence, to remember his commandments and to keep them were two distinct things—to remember them, and to do them. To do so is to have life. This is the wisdom that is life. The opposite of following wisdom is to walk in the path of the wicked, or to walk in the way of evil men. There is danger and death along that way. God's warnings and prohibitions are danger signals that he has erected along the way of life. Like the signs along our highways, they are erected for the benefit and safety of those who travel the way of life.

"Avoid It, Pass Not by It" (Verses 15-17)

Avoid the path of evil men—pass not along its hazardous course. Do not make wicked men your social companions. "For they sleep not, except they do evil." They remain awake, while honest people sleep, that they may accomplish their evil purposes. So full of evil are they, that "their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall." It is not always a disturbance of conscience that keeps the wicked man awake; he is sometimes so disturbed over his failure to accomplish a wicked deed that he cannot sleep. In his disappointment over his failure, he lies awake trying to figure out why he failed and how to succeed. No one can promise himself anything but trouble when he walks in the path of the wicked man. "He deviseth

iniquity upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good; he abhorreth not evil." (Psalm 36: 4.) When a man starts on an evil course, he grows worse and worse till he reaches such a state of depravity that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually. (Gen. 6: 5.) There can be no good in such people. "They eat the bread of wickedness." They live off the proceeds of their crimes. Violence is as stimulating to them as wine—they are drunk on crime. Men who live by violence have no more right to life than a poisonous snake; they are a greater menace than deadly serpents or ferocious beasts. They have no regard for human life, and some of them take delight in killing people.

Two Ways Contrasted (Verses 18, 19)

"But the path of the righteous is as the dawning light." A righteous person's life is a light to others. The light that radiates from the righteous comes from God through his word. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and light unto my path." (Psalm 119: 105.) "For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light." (Prov. 6: 23.) There is light in a good man's life, and doubly so when that good man holds up before others the light of God's word. As he grows in righteousness and power to teach others, his light "shineth more and more unto the perfect day." But not so with the wicked. His way is as darkness, which grows more and more dark to the day of his doom. Both his life and his words are as darkness. He could be a help, but he is a hindrance; he could be a blessing, but he is a curse. He has nothing to guide him, save his wicked desires and impulses. "They know not at what they stumble." Good sense has fled from them, and sound judgment is gone. Concerning the desperate condition of his people, Isaiah said, "We grope for the wall like the blind; yea, we grope as they that have no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the twilight; among them that are lusty we are as dead men." (Isa. 59: 10.)

"Keep Thy Heart with All Diligence" (Verses 20-23)

Verses 19-22 are practically a repetition of what had already been said; yet there is an additional emphasis on the importance and the manner of keeping the wise man's sayings. "Keep them in the midst of thy heart." Keep them in the very center of your heart—give them first place. Paul gives this admonition to Christians: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." (Col. 3: 16.) "Write them upon the tablet of thy heart." (Prov. 7: 3.) "Thy word have I laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Psalm 119: 11.) "They are life unto those that find them." The absence of God's words is death; their presence is life, peace, and joy. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Our whole course of life depends on the condition of the heart. The heart is the foundation, the course of life is the stream that flows from it. It is the treasure house from which our deeds come. "Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things; and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." (Matt. 12: 34, 35.) "For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries,

fornications, thefts, false witness, railings." (Matt. 15: 19.) If the heart is pure, the life will be clean and wholesome; if the heart is corrupt, the life cannot be otherwise than evil. But in a world where there is so much smudge and filth, where people hear and see so much that is vile and degrading, it requires diligence to keep some of it from lodging in our hearts.

(1 Thess. 5: 6-8)

Our printed text here begins in the middle of a point Paul was making. Read the preceding verses. "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." "When they are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall in no wise escape." The day of destruction will come when it is not expected. There will then be no time for preparation. "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." The thief comes when not expected. If we knew when he was coming, we would be prepared. No one knows when the day of the Lord will come; but the faithful Christian is prepared no matter when it comes. In effect, the day of the Lord comes when a person dies; for as death finds him, so shall the judgment. When he stands before the judge, he will be in character exactly as he was when death came. But the Christian is not in darkness. "For ye are all sons of light, and sons of the day." Darkness and night, light and day, are here used to represent the conditions of the sinner and the child of God. The sinner is in darkness, it is night with him; the Christian is in the light of the gospel, it is day with him. "So then let us not sleep, as do the rest." Sleep is here used to represent a state of inactivity as to right living. As the Christian is in the daylight of the gospel, he should be awake to its demands. If he sleeps on duty, he cannot be watchful. "Be sober." Keep your poise and balance; do not become excited, or fanatical, or flighty; be sober-minded. It is always night to the man who is in sin, and such a man is constantly asleep both to his duty and his danger. But people are so shameless now in their drunkenness, that it matters not with them whether they be drunk in the day or in the night. But in a figurative sense, it is always night with the drunkard, for he is in darkness. Christians are of the day, and should be sober, constantly wearing the breastplate of faith and love; "and for a helmet, the hope of salvation." Thus prepared, he is ready, no matter when the day of the Lord comes, or when death comes.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Drunkards lose opportunities here and heaven hereafter.

It is strange that people will drink that which robs them of their sense and self-respect.

Love for God, for self, and fellow men will prevent drunkenness.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

How drunkenness increases poverty.

Whose business is it if I get drunk?

The evils of liquor advertising.

Is the government a party to the crime of drunkenness?

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
Give the meaning of the word temperance.
Name some of the evils of drunkenness.
Discuss the drunken driver.

Verses 10-12

For what purpose was Proverbs written?
Discuss verse 10.
Give the difference between wisdom and knowledge.
How keep out of unpleasant situations?
Show the folly of crime.
What advantage is there in right living?

Verses 13, 14

Discuss verse 13.
Give Solomon's high estimate of wisdom.
Who finds guidance in the Bible?

Discuss remembering and keeping instruction.
How may we have life?

Verses 15-17

Read and discuss, verse at a time, verses 15-17.

Verses 18, 19

How is the path of the righteous light?
How do the righteous shine more and more?
Discuss the way of the wicked.

Verses 20-23

What is meant by keeping God's word in the midst of the heart?
Discuss the reference given on this point.

1 Thess. 5: 6-8

Discuss verses 1-4.
We are sons of what?
What does Paul here mean by light and darkness, day and night?
"Let us not sleep"—what does he mean?
To whom is it always darkness?
What must the Christian wear?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VIII—August 21, 1938

HANNAH: GODLY MOTHERHOOD

1 Sam. 1: 9-18; 2: 1-5

9 So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest was sitting upon his seat by the doorpost of the temple of Jehovah.

10 And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto Jehovah, and wept sore.

11 And she vowed a vow, and said, O Jehovah of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thy handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thy handmaid, but wilt give unto thy handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto Jehovah all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

12 And it came to pass, as she continued praying before Jehovah, that Eli marked her mouth.

13 Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken.

14 And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.

15 And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I poured out my soul before Jehovah.

16 Count not thy handmaid for a wicked woman; for out of the abundance of my complaint and my provocation have I spoken hitherto.

17 Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace; and the God of Israel grant thy petition that thou hast asked of him.

18 And she said, Let thy handmaid find favor in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat; and her countenance was no more sad.

1 And Hannah prayed, and said:
My heart exulteth in Jehovah;
My horn is exalted in Jehovah;
My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies;
Because I rejoice in thy salvation.

- 2 There is none holy as Jehovah;
For there is none besides thee,
Neither is there any rock like our God.
3 Talk no more so exceeding proudly;
Let not arrogancy come out of your mouth;
For Jehovah is a God of knowledge,
And by him actions are weighed.
4 The bows of the mighty men are broken;
And they that stumbled are girded with strength.
5 They that were full have hired out themselves for bread;
And they that were hungry have ceased to hunger;
Yea, the barren hath borne seven;
And she that hath many children languisheth.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Her children rise up, and call her blessed.” (Prov 31: 28.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 128.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

August 15.	M.	Hannah's Vow (1 Sam. 1: 9-13)
August 16.	T.	Hannah's Prayer Heard (1 Sam. 1: 14-18)
August 17.	W.	Hannah's Thanksgiving (1 Sam. 2: 1-5)
August 18.	T.	A Mother in Distress (Mark 7: 24-30)
August 19.	F.	A Mother in Sorrow (Luke 7: 11-17)
August 20.	S.	Praise of a Good Mother (Prov. 31: 25-31)
August 21.	S.	Children a Blessing (Psalm 128: 1-6)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—According to Hales, 1202 B.C.; according to Calmet, 1151 B.C.

Places.—Ramathaim-zophim and Shiloh. Ramathaim-zophim, more often called simply Ramah, was in the hill country of Ephraim. Its location is not now definitely known. The tabernacle was located at Shiloh for a long period, beginning with the latter years of Joshua. Shiloh's location is given in Judges 21: 19: “And they said, Behold, there is a feast of Jehovah from year to year in Shiloh, which is on the north of Beth-el, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Beth-el to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah.”

Persons.—Eli, Elkanah, his wife Hannah, and the child Samuel.

Lesson Links.—At the time of our lesson Eli was the high priest. “Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, of the hill-country of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, . . . and he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.” Elkanah was regular in his attendance on the worship at Shiloh. Women in those days considered it a great misfortune, if not a disgrace, not to have children. From the beginning it was God's plan that a man have one wife and a woman have one husband, but in the corruption of the times more than one wife was permitted; and so Elkanah had two wives. He perhaps married Peninnah after he found that Hannah would bear no children; but the arrangement brought trouble and distress to both Elkanah and Hannah. He could not properly control Peninnah and her children, and they made life miserable for Hannah to the great grief of Elkanah. Perhaps Hannah had her own house and could stay out of the company of Peninnah when at home, but when they all went to Shiloh to worship it was different. On that journey they would be thrown together. Even at Shiloh, the place of worship, where everything should have

been orderly and pervaded by a spirit of worship, it seems that Peninnah and her children made themselves especially disagreeable to Hannah, so that such treatment had reached the limit of Hannah's endurance. On these visits, when they ate, Elkanah set a double portion before Hannah. Of course this favoritism provoked Peninnah and her children so that they made life as miserable for Hannah as they could. "Therefore she wept, and did not eat." Hannah had reached the point where she was indulging too much in self-pity, and that is bad for any one.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Hannah Prays in Bitterness of Soul (Verses 9, 10)

Then one who made certain offerings ate certain parts thereof. This is perhaps the eating that is referred to in verse nine. Eli was judge as well as high priest. He judged Israel forty years. (Chapter 4: 18.) "Now Eli the priest was sitting upon his seat by the doorpost of the temple of Jehovah." This perhaps refers to his judgment seat. Hannah was praying near by, in great bitterness of soul. Her disappointment at not having children and the persecution of Peninnah had driven her almost to despair, but not quite; she would pour out her soul in prayer and tears. She was far removed in heart and character from these modern women who will not bear children. All honor to Hannah.

Hannah's Prayer and Pledge (Verse 11)

The prayers of the Bible are brief and to the point. It seems that in Bible times those who prayed to God made up their minds as to what they wanted, and prayed for that. Their prayers were not just words and more words. They did not pray for everything they could think of. On a great state occasion Solomon prayed a rather long prayer; but that was a special occasion. (See 1 Kings 8: 22-53; 2 Chron. 6: 12-42.) Notice how brief and pointed is Hannah's prayer: "And she vowed a vow, and said, O Jehovah of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thy handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thy handmaid, but wilt give unto thy handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto Jehovah all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head." Her failure to bear children she regarded as an affliction. She made a vow concerning the man-child for which she prayed. It seems that it was common among the Hebrews to make special vows, so much so that the Lord gave laws concerning vows. "When thou shalt vow a vow unto Jehovah thy God, thou shalt not be slack to pay it: for Jehovah thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee." (Deut. 23: 21, 22.) Fuller regulations concerning vows are given in the thirtieth chapter of Numbers. Hannah vowed to give the son for which she prayed to Jehovah all the days of his life. She would have to fulfill that vow. She also made a vow for the son. He was never to have a razor on his head. This was one of the requirements of the Nazirite vow. (Num. 6: 1-12.) Hence, it seems that the son for which she prayed was to be a Nazirite all

the days of his life. In a special sense he was to belong to Jehovah. She would not profit by any of his favors.

Eli Accuses Hannah of Being Drunk (Verses 12-14)

Desire is not prayer. Paul said, "My heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved." (Rom. 10: 1.) Hannah desired a son, and she prayed for one. She framed her prayer in the words recorded in verse eleven. She framed the words with her lips, but did not speak them in an audible voice—"only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard." Eli, observing her actions and the movement of her lips, too hastily decided that she was drunk, and said to her, "How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee." His conclusion was hasty and unwarranted. It was a cruel thing for him to say. Had he known Hannah, he would have easily formed a different judgment of her actions. Of course, Hannah felt the sting of his unjust charge; and had she been of a disposition to retaliate, she could have reminded him that he had better be looking after his two notoriously corrupt sons. But Hannah made no disrespectful reply. Eli was God's appointed high priest, and as such she respected him. Besides, Eli was a good man in a passive sort of way. His sons were about as corrupt morally as men could well be. "Now the sons of Eli were base men; they knew not Jehovah." (1 Sam. 2: 12.) Their corrupt practices are told in 1 Sam. 2: 13-17. Eli knew of their wickedness, and protested against it. (1 Sam. 2: 22-25.) But he did no more than to protest against their sinful conduct. Passive goodness never corrects any evils. They were so openly corrupt that Hannah must have known of their baseness; but she did not remind Eli that his own sons, while officiating as priests in God's sacred things, were guilty of much worse conduct than drinking wine.

Hannah's Reply to Eli (Verses 15, 16)

She meekly and courteously replied to Eli, "No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I poured out my soul before Jehovah. Count not thy handmaid for a wicked woman; for out of the abundance of my complaint and my provocation have I spoken hitherto." She was of a sorrowful spirit because of her barrenness, and that was the grounds of her complaint. The natural desire of every normal wife is to be a mother. There is something wrong with every wife who does not desire the glory and responsibility of motherhood. The provocation of which Hannah spoke was the tormenting attitude of Peninnah and her children. No one likes to be jeered at and scoffed at because of a misfortune for which he or she is in no wise responsible. It is bad enough to have an affliction without being ridiculed because of it. Hannah had poured out her soul before Jehovah; she had one desire above all others, and for that she had prayed. When people are deeply in earnest, they pray for the one desire of their heart. When a person prays for everything; he is just praying, because it is considered the proper thing to do. A prayer of that sort is usually empty of soul, and barren of results.

Eli Adds His Prayer (Verses 17, 18)

The gentleness of Hannah's reply to Eli softened him, and likely made him ashamed that he had so rashly accused this gentle and devout woman. "Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace; and the God of Israel grant thy petition that thou hast asked of him." Thus Eli added his prayer to Hannah's, and this so filled her with confidence that she went away with a light heart, "and did eat; and her countenance was no more sad." But if the Lord gave her any direct assurance that her prayer would be answered, we have no record of it. She believed that God would grant her earnest petition. Here faith in God's willingness and ability to answer prayer would put to shame many professed Christians of today. Some go so far as to say that God cannot answer prayer without working a miracle, thus making God more helpless than any of his creatures.

Hannah's Prayer of Thanksgiving (1 Sam. 2: 1-5)

Read the verses between the two sections of our printed text. After the incidents in the first part of our lesson, "they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before Jehovah, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah." Hannah's prayer for a son was answered, "and she called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of Jehovah." Hannah came no more to Shiloh to worship till the child was weaned. Then she came to the place of worship with her son, bringing with her sacrifices and offerings. To Eli the priest she said, "Oh, my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto Jehovah. For this child I prayed; and Jehovah hath given me my petition which I asked of him." At the time she did not tell Eli the burden of her prayer. She was sure the child would be given in answer to her prayer. She remembered that prayer. Many prayers are so scattering and desultory, and are made up of so many petitions, that the one praying does not long remember what he prayed for. He would not know if one of his numerous petitions had been granted. Because of her vow, and because Samuel had been given in answer to prayer, she said to Eli, "Therefore also I have granted him to Jehovah; as long as he liveth he is granted to Jehovah." In ordinary cases the child would remain with his parents, and help them with their labors—that is, it was the rule in those days. But Hannah would claim none of the services of her son for herself. Then Hannah prayed again—this time it was a prayer of praise and thanksgiving. In the first verse she expresses her own feelings and emotions. Her cup of joy was running over. She could now boast above her enemies. Then she turned from speaking of her emotions and gave expression to them in praise to Jehovah. At her last visit to Shiloh she had prayed in bitterness of spirit, but what a change has taken place in the spirit of this good woman. No happier woman lived. "There is none holy as Jehovah; for there is none besides thee, neither is there any rock like our God." And so continue the praises of this good woman through the ten verses of her prayer of praise and thanksgiving. In saying, "Talk no more so exceeding proudly," she seemed to have Peninnah in mind. After this they returned to their home at Ramah, but they left little Samuel with Eli the priest. "And the child did minister unto Jehovah before Eli the priest." The parents must

have returned home with mixed emotions—glad that they had a son whom they could give to the service of Jehovah, but sad that they would see him only when they went to Shiloh to worship.

SOME REFLECTIONS

There is something lacking in a home where there are no children. It is an unnatural home. And normal people need the development of character that comes through the experience of parenthood.

If Hannah had not so earnestly prayed for a son, there would not have been a Samuel to bless and judge Israel, and Hannah's name would not have graced the pages of history. Hannah was a great blessing to her nation.

Eli, like many people of today, was opposed to sin in a passive way. He protested against the base conduct of his sons, and let it go at that. Some people are actively opposed to sin, and fight it with all their might. Passive opposition to sin amounts to very little, and to attempt to excuse, or to palliate, sin is positively hurtful.

It is not well to be hasty in our judgments. We, like Eli, may condemn when we should praise. Hasty judgment is never good for one's own character; and a hasty judgment may work great injury to a person wrongly condemned. Know the facts, and then form your conclusions. And we should be just as careful not to condone and excuse sin in ourselves and others.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The law of vows.
Some great women of the Bible.
Being hasty in judging others.
Examples of answered prayer.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
At this time where did the Hebrews go to worship?
Give facts about Elkanah's two wives.
What grieved Elkanah?
What made Hannah so bitter in spirit?

Verses 9, 10

Who was high priest?
Where did Hannah go to pray?

Verse 11

What is characteristic of the prayers in the Bible?
What was Hannah's prayer and vow?
What did she mean by her affliction?
What was the law concerning vows?
What was the son to be from birth?
Give the requirements of the Nazirite vow.

Verses 12-14

Show that prayer is more than desire.
How did Hannah pray?
What did Eli say?
Of what might she have reminded him?
What was the character of Eli's sons?
What did he do about it?

Verses 15, 16

How did Hannah answer Eli?
Discuss the incident as it appears to you.

Verses 17, 18

What reply did Eli make?
What did Hannah then do?

1 Sam. 2: 1-5

Give the incidents between the two printed sections of our lesson.
Discuss the nature of Hannah's prayer.
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IX—August 28, 1938

ELI: RESPONSIBILITY FOR OTHERS

1 Sam. 3: 11-14; 4: 12-18

11 And Jehovah said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.

12 In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from the beginning even unto the end.

13 For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves, and he restrained them not.

14 And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

12 And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day, with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head.

13 And when he came, lo, Eli was sitting upon his seat by the wayside watching; for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out.

14 And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What meaneth the noise of this tumult? And the man hastened, and came and told Eli.

15 Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were set, so that he could not see.

16 And the man said unto Eli I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to-day out of the army. And he said, How went the matter, my son?

17 And he that brought the tidings answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.

18 And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that Eli fell from off his seat backward by the side of the gate; and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Train up a child in the way he should go."* (Prov. 22: 6.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Gal. 6: 7-10.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

August 22.	M.	.....	Eli's Sons Unrestrained (1 Sam. 3: 10-14)
August 23.	T.	.....	Defeat and Death (1 Sam. 4: 12-18)
August 24.	W.	.....	Denying Responsibility for Others (Gen. 4: 9-13)
August 25.	T.	.....	Acknowledging Responsibility for Others (Ex. 32: 30-34)
August 26.	F.	.....	Duties in the Home (Col. 3: 18-25)
August 27.	S.	.....	Sorrow for a Wayward Son (2 Sam. 18: 31-33)
August 28.	S.	.....	The Law of the Harvest (Gal. 6: 7-10)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—According to Hales, 1152 B.C. for the first part of the lesson; ten years later for the second part of the lesson.

Place.—Shiloh.

Persons.—Jehovah, Samuel, Eli, Hophni, and Phinehas.

Lesson Links.—Eli was both high priest and judge. It is impossible to determine fully the duties and powers of the judges in ancient Israel. The judge appeared to be a combination of ruler and judge. Some of them became judges by their success in wars, others did not. Combining the offices of judge and high priest, as in the case of Eli, gave such a person extensive powers; such a one had jurisdiction over the worship and also over the civil affairs of the people. As high priest Eli should have kept things in order about the taber-

nacle; he should have seen to it that all the sacrifices were offered and disposed of according to the law; as judge and ruler, Eli should have seen to it that law violators were properly punished. While Eli was a believer in Jehovah and appeared to be pious and clean in his own personal habits, he was too soft and lenient, and too indulgent toward his base sons. "Now the sons of Eli were base men; they knew not Jehovah." Of certain sacrifices the breast and the right thigh belonged to the priests, and the rest was to be eaten by the person who brought the animal for sacrifice, excepting the fat; that was to be burned on the altar. (Lev. 7: 22-34.) But Eli's sons had no regard for this law. They took the fat for themselves, thus putting themselves above Jehovah; and they took whatever other parts of the animals that suited them, even taking by force what they desired. They also indulged in immoral practices "with the women that did service at the door of the tent of meeting." Eli knew of these base practices, and should have put a stop to it, punishing the guilty, if necessary, even if they were his own sons. He did not approve the conduct of his sons, and even mildly protested against their practices, and then let matters go on as they were. Perhaps Eli felt, that in delivering the mild rebuke, he had cleared himself, but not so. A man is never clear till he does his duty, and Eli's duty required more than a mild rebuke. It required that he put a stop to his sons' profaning the tabernacle and the worship. Jehovah sent a prophet to Eli to make some startling revelations to him. One thing said by the prophet indicates that Eli himself had profited by the greed of his sons concerning the sacrifices: "Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation, and honorest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?" They had kicked at the sacrifices in that they were not satisfied with the portion of the sacrifices God had allowed them. In allowing his sons to go on corrupting the worship of God, Eli was honoring them above Jehovah; they were carrying on the worship to suit themselves, and Eli was sustaining them in their office. Their way meant more to him than God's way. To excuse a person in his disobedience, or to make no decided effort to correct his wrongs, is to honor him above Jehovah. For these reasons the priesthood would be taken away from the family of Eli.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Jehovah Speaks to Samuel (Verse 11)

"And the word of Jehovah was precious in those days; there was no frequent vision." (Verse 1.) The word of God was precious in the sense that it was rare. The Lord did not make frequent revelations. As the Lord selected a mere child through whom to make a revelation, there must have been no man fit to be a prophet. In the night Jehovah called to Samuel, but Samuel thought Eli was calling him, and he arose and went to Eli. Eli said, "I called not; lie down again." The same thing was repeated. "Now Samuel did not yet know Jehovah, neither was the word of Jehovah yet revealed unto him." Jehovah called Samuel the third time, and Samuel, again thinking Eli called him, reported to Eli. "And Eli perceived that

Jehovah had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Jehovah; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And Jehovah came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel said, Speak; for thy servant heareth." Then Jehovah told Samuel that he would do a thing that would stir the whole nation of Israel. Since Eli would not restrain his sons from their gross sins, Jehovah would bring to an end their evil careers.

The Family of Eli Doomed (Verses 12-14)

In that day, the day in which he would do a thing that would cause both the ears of all who heard it to tingle, he would perform against Eli all that he had spoken against his house. This refers to what Jehovah had told Eli through the prophet, as recorded in 1 Sam. 2: 27-36. The prophet had said, "There shall not be an old man in thy house." "All the increase of thy house shall die in the flower of their age." As Eli would not stop the evil practices of his sons, nor cut them off from the priesthood, nor punish them as a judge should have done, Jehovah would do all three of these things. The prophet also said, "And this shall be the sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas: in one day they shall die both of them." Therefore he said to Samuel, "For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves, and he restrained them not." And so Eli's mild protest against the evil deeds of his sons was not counted by Jehovah as worth notice. It appears that Eli was guilty in three ways: (1) Hophni and Phinehas were his sons. He should have given them better training. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it." (Prov. 22: 6.) But it sometimes happens that evil influences of which the parents know nothing more than counteract all that parents can do. But if a son could not be controlled by the parents, they were required to report him to the elders of the city; "and all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones." (Deut. 21: 18-21.) That would be a grievous thing for parents to do, but such a son would be a source of continued grief any way. One way to lessen crime is to stop the criminal. Eli had not properly trained his sons, nor had he obeyed the law respecting rebellious sons. (2) Eli was high priest; as such it was his duty to see that things went on as they should about the tabernacle. He knew that his sons were immoral, and that they constantly violated in a shameful way the laws governing the sacrifices, and yet he did no more than enter a mild protest against their corrupt practices. (3) Eli was ruler-judge. It was his duty to enforce the law impartially. The crimes of his sons were open and scandalous. Besides their immoral conduct, they were knowingly profaning the worship of Jehovah. They should have been dealt with severely, but Eli did nothing about it. He therefore failed in his duties as a father, and as a high priest, and as a judge. But Eli's failure to do his duty did not excuse the criminal record of his sons; they would have to answer for their crimes. Eli's failure to do his duty did not license the sons to do evil. Too many people try to justify themselves by

blaming some one else. But such tactics have no influence with the Judge of all the earth; "for each man shall bear his own burden." (Gal. 6: 5.) "If thou art wise, thou art wise for thyself; and if thou scoffest, thou alone shalt bear it." (Prov. 9: 12.) One person may help another, and it is his duty to try to do so, but one cannot answer for another. Eli and his sons had incurred the wrath of God, and each one would have to pay the penalty for his sins. "And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated with sacrifice nor offering for ever." Their sins had gone beyond the reach of mercy. No sacrifice that they could make would atone for their sins.

Intervening Verses (3: 15 to 4: 11)

The verses between the two printed sections of our lesson should be studied, for they are really included in our lesson. At the earnest demands of Eli, Samuel told Eli all that Jehovah had said to him. Meekly Eli said, "It is Jehovah: let him do what seemeth him good." As Samuel grew, he attended faithfully to his duties and gave strict attention to the word of God. "And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of Jehovah." At this time Israel determined to throw off the yoke of the Philistines, but they were severely defeated in battle. Had they been faithful to Jehovah, he would have given them the victory. They had a superstitious notion that the ark of the covenant in their midst would enable them to win the next battle. They brought the ark of the covenant from Shiloh, and the two notoriously corrupt sons of Eli went along to care for the ark. It did frighten the Philistines just enough to make them fight more furiously. Israel suffered a terrible defeat—thirty thousand of them were killed. "And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain."

A Runner Bears the News to Shiloh (Verses 12-14)

With the means we now have for sending news in a moment of time, it is hard for us to realize that anciently news dispatches were sent by runners. They did not complain of that slow method, for they had no better way, nor did they have any idea that there ever would be a better and quicker way. When the battle with the Philistines was lost, a runner was sent to carry the news to Shiloh. He reached Shiloh the same day, with his clothes rent and with earth upon his head. This method of expressing distress and sorrow and despair was not confined to the Hebrews, but was common among the Greeks and the Romans, as their literature abundantly shows. Doubtless the ark had been carried into that battle against the advice of Eli. He was sitting in his seat, anxiously awaiting news of the battle; "for his heart trembled for the ark of God." It is to his credit that he was so anxious about the ark of God; it seems that he was more anxious about the ark than about his sons. It appears that the runner reached the city with the news before he reached the tabernacle. The news created a great commotion in the city. It roused Eli and he inquired what it meant. At this juncture the messenger arrived and told him.

The Fatal Effects of the News on Eli (Verses 15-18)

Because Eli could not see by reason of age, the messenger identified himself as one who had fled from the army. "How went the matter, my son?" Then the man did as fine a job of reporting as any one is likely ever to read. Notice the brevity, and yet the completeness of the report, and not one essential detail was left out. There is another striking thing about the report—its rapid ascent to a climax. "Israel is fled before the Philistines." For the army to be routed by any enemy was bad; but to be put to flight by such merciless enemies as the Philistines was a calamity. The Philistines would now make their burdens heavier than ever. "And there hath been also a great slaughter among the people." The nation had lost many of its effective men, and there were left many widows and fatherless children, as is always the case in war. Many parents were also bereft of sons. It was a calamity greater than retreat before an enemy. "And thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead." Though these sons were bad, yet they were Eli's sons, and he loved them. And they were perhaps his only support in his helpless old age. To him their death was indeed a tragedy, "And the ark of God is taken." This was more than the aged priest could stand. The symbol of God's presence was now gone from Israel, and with it had gone all of Eli's hopes. At the news about the ark "Eli fell from off his seat backward by the side of the gate; and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy."

SOME REFLECTIONS

The sons of Eli carried on the worship and service of the tabernacle to gratify their own desires. They corrupted the worship for their own gratification. Their desires determined what was done. Those who add things to the worship for their own pleasure should remember Hophni and Phinehas.

However positive may be the promises of God concerning individuals, families, and nations, they are conditional. Jehovah had said to Eli, "Thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever." Perhaps Eli, like some of today, thought such a promise was unconditional and that the priesthood would be sure to his seed forever. "But now Jehovah saith, Be it far from me." The priesthood would go to another family of the descendants of Aaron.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

- The sin of corrupting the worship.
- Wherein Eli failed.
- Why losing the ark seemed so tragic.
- God's promises conditional.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
Who was Eli?

What seems to have been the duties of the judges in Israel?
Give Eli's duties and responsibilities.
What is said of his sons?
How did they disregard the law of sacrifices?

What did Eli do about it?

Give the substance of what a prophet said to Eli.

How did Eli honor his sons above Jehovah?

How may we honor men above Jehovah?

Verse 11

In what sense was the word of God precious?

Tell about Jehovah's speaking to Samuel.

Verses 12-14

Give the substance of Samuel's report to Eli.

Discuss the points wherein Eli had failed.

Show that Eli's failure did not excuse the sons.

How far is one person responsible for another?

Intervening Verses (3: 15 to 4: 11)

What is said of Samuel?

Give account of Israel's battle

Why did they then take along the ark of God?

Verses 12-14

How was news transmitted in those days?

How did the news of the battle reach Shiloh?

About what was Eli especially anxious?

What effect did the news have on the people of Shiloh?

Verses 15-18

Discuss the man's report to Eli.

Name some striking features of his report.

Why did losing the ark seem such a tragedy to Eli?

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson X—September 4, 1938

SAMUEL: SPIRITUAL REVIVAL

1 Sam. 7: 3-13

3 And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto Jehovah with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and direct your hearts unto Jehovah, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.

4 Then the children of Israel did put away the Baalim and the Ashtaroth, and served Jehovah only.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Direct your hearts unto Jehovah, and serve him only.” (1 Sam. 7: 3.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 125.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

August 29.	M.	Revival at Mizpah (1 Sam. 7: 3-6)
August 30.	T.	Victory at Mizpah (1 Sam. 7: 7-13)
August 31.	W.	The Kingdom First (Matt. 6: 31-34)
September 1.	T.	One Thing Needful (Luke 10: 38-42)
September 2.	F.	Prayer for a Revival (Psalm 85: 4-9)
September 3.	S.	Where a Revival Begins (Psalm 81: 7-13)
September 4.	S.	Righteousness and Security (Psalm 125: 1-5)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—The exact date cannot be determined, but it must have been about 1120 B.C.

Place.—Mizpah, and westward toward the land of the Philistines. There were two places named Mizpah, or Mizpeh. There was one in the territory of Benjamin, not far to the north of Jerusalem. This must have been the place of our lesson. The word Mizpah meant, "a watchtower."

Persons.—Samuel, the people of Israel, and the armies of the Philistines. The Philistines inhabited a strip of country along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, and were established in that land as early as the days of Abraham. (Gen. 21: 32; 26: 1.) They were such a warlike people, that when Israel left Egypt, "God led them not by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt." (Ex. 13: 17.) And after Israel settled in the land of Palestine, the Philistines made frequent wars upon them.

Lesson Links.—Samuel was born in answer to the prayers of a good woman. (1 Sam. 1: 9-20.) To fulfill her pledge to God, Samuel was left to minister to God at the tabernacle after he was weaned. (1 Sam. 1: 21-28; 2: 11.) Jehovah began to manifest himself to Samuel while Samuel was yet a child. (1 Sam. 3: 1-18.) By the time he had grown up, all Israel knew that he was established to be a prophet of Jehovah. (1 Sam. 3: 19-21.) The people of Israel had so far departed from Jehovah that he had allowed them to be conquered and ruled by the Philistines. This state of affairs had gone on for a number of years, during which time they had made unsuccessful attempts to free themselves. The last effort they had made resulted so disastrously to them as to seem to them that their nation was ruined for all time. The ark, which was to them the most sacred thing they possessed, had been carried off by their enemies. This was a special calamity to all who still retained their faith in Jehovah. In their view, when the ark of God was gone from them, God's presence had also departed from them. Eli's daughter-in-law, in the hour of her death, expressed their feelings, saying, "The glory is departed from Israel; for the ark of God is taken." (1 Sam. 4: 19-22.) But the ark of God did not prove to be a blessing to the Philistines, but the reverse. God's presence is a blessing to those who love and serve him, but death and disaster to his enemies. The ark in the house of Dagon, one of the gods of the Philistines, was disastrous to Dagon. And God punished severely the men of Ashdod, the city to which the ark was first taken. They then sent the ark to Gath, another city of the Philistines; and Gath fared as badly as had Ashdod. Then the ark was sent to Ekron, another Philistine city.

Disaster came upon many of that city. They asked the lords of the Philistines to come and send the ark back to its own place. "For there was a deadly discomfiture throughout all the city; the hand of God was heavy there." Their priest and their diviners were called in to tell them what to do. God so overruled these priests and diviners that they gave good advice. Their advice and the manner of sending the ark back to the land of Israel is interesting reading. The ark was brought into the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh. None but Levites were allowed to touch the ark, but the men of Beth-shemesh allowed their curiosity to lead them to look into the ark, which cost many of them their lives. The ark was then carried to the house of Abinadab at Kiriath-jearim, where it remained twenty years. Nothing is said as to what had become of the tabernacle, but it was later spoken of as at Gibeon. (1 Chron. 16: 39; 21: 29.) It does not seem that the ark of the covenant was ever placed in the old tabernacle again.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Samuel Points the Way to Deliverance (Verses 3, 4)

For a long time the people of Israel had been under subjection to the Philistines. Israel never was conquered by another nation so long as they were faithful to Jehovah, and they were always able to come out from under foreign dominion when they turned to Jehovah. Samuel pointed out to them the way of escape from Philistine domination. "If ye do return unto Jehovah with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and direct your hearts unto Jehovah, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." To turn unto God with all their heart was their only hope of deliverance. To thus turn to him, they would have to put away all their false gods—they would have to serve Jehovah only. They could not put Jehovah and the foreign gods on an equal footing, and worship both. To attempt such a thing would show a low estimate of Jehovah. If they expected his blessings, they must give him their service. If they would serve him only, he would deliver them out of the hand of the Philistines. They had suffered so much from the Philistines that they gladly followed Samuel's directions.

Samuel Calls a Meeting at Mizpah (Verses 5, 6)

When Samuel saw that the people were in earnest about turning to Jehovah, he called for them to meet at Mizpah. The time had come for action. If they expected God to deliver them from the domination of the Philistines, they must do something about it. It is probable that only men able to go to war came to this meeting. It is difficult to determine what they meant to signify by drawing water and pouring it out, but it was a religious ceremony—they poured it out unto Jehovah. They also fasted on that day, and made confessions of their sins, saying, "We have sinned against Jehovah." They had turned from Jehovah to worship idols, and were then conquered by the nation who worshiped these idols. It had taken them a long time to see their folly; but it finally dawned upon them that they

alone were to blame for their national troubles. No doubt Samuel had to do much teaching to bring about this reformation. All genuine reformations are brought about by correct teaching. People must see their sins and their need of repentance before they make any effort to amend their ways; and they then must turn to God with all their heart. A halfhearted reformation is only a pretense; such pretended reformation leads one to say, "If I have done wrong, . . ." But the men of Israel said, "We have sinned against Jehovah." And at this meeting Samuel held court—"judged the children of Israel in Mizpah"—to straighten out any matters that were wrong between the people. Wrongs had to be righted, else they could not expect Jehovah to give them victory. Samuel knew that such a meeting as he was holding would stir up the Philistines against them. He must therefore get the people in the proper frame of mind and heart so that Jehovah would be with them. The prophet Azariah said, "Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: Jehovah is with you, while ye are with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you." (2 Chron. 15: 1, 2.) Azariah's statement is always true. Samuel knew it, and had so taught the people of Israel. Hence, their repentance and confession of sin.

The Philistines Move Against Israel (Verses 7, 8)

Of course, in calling the men of Israel to this meeting at Mizpah, Samuel would have them to bring whatever equipment for war that they might have, for he would know that the Philistines would seek to break up such meetings of people held in subjection. So soon as the Philistines heard of this meeting, "the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel." There were five of these lords; and of course each lord led an army made up out of the men of his own city and surrounding territory. They determined to break up this gathering of Israel before it got beyond their control. They did not know that they were going up against the almighty power of Jehovah. The men of Israel did not think Jehovah was in their midst, or else they did not consider him almighty, for the approach of the Philistines filled them with fear. Yet they had some faith, for they said to Samuel, "Cease not to cry unto Jehovah our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines." They were making their prayer through Samuel. And always when they had turned from their sins and idols, and trusted in Jehovah, he had heard their prayers and delivered them from their enemies.

The Philistines Defeated (Verses 9-11)

What Samuel and the children of Israel did had to be done quickly, for the armies of the Philistines were coming. Before praying for Israel, Samuel offered a lamb as a burnt offering. He offered a sucking lamb. This was allowed by law, but any young animal had to be a week old before it was acceptable as a sacrifice. (Lev. 22: 26, 27.) It seems that Samuel prayed for Israel before he finished offering the sacrifice, for while he was yet offering it "the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel." They meant to put down this rebellious move before it got well started. "But Jehovah thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discom-

fited them." It seems that there was a great storm. Either Josephus had sources of information that have been lost, or else he drew heavily on his imagination in describing what took place on that day, for among other things he says, "But things so fell out, that they would hardly have been credited though they had been foretold by any body; for in the first place, God disturbed the enemies with an earthquake, and moved the ground under them to such a degree, that he caused it to tremble, and made them to shake, insomuch that, by its trembling, he made some unable to keep their feet, and made them fall down, and by opening its chasms, he caused that others should be hurried down into them; after which he caused such a noise of thunder to come among them, and made fiery lightning shine so terribly round about them, that it was ready to burn their faces; and so suddenly shook their weapons out of their hands, that he made them fly and return home naked." The Philistines suffered a disastrous defeat, and fled toward their cities, with the men of Israel in hot pursuit. "And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Beth-car." The location of Beth-car is not known. It was west of Mizpah, for the Philistines were fleeing to their cities, which were westward.

"So the Philistines Were Subdued" (Verses 12, 13)

Where Samuel and the men of Israel stopped their pursuit of the Philistines, Samuel set up a stone, evidently to mark the boundary line. He called it Ebenezer, that is, "the stone of help." Josephus called it the "stone of power." Samuel said, "Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us." The men of Israel had said to Samuel, "Cease not to cry unto Jehovah our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines." "And Jehovah answered him." After this victory of the Hebrews, the Philistines were comparatively quiet all the days of Samuel. Jehovah saved them, but they had to do what they could. Alone they would have been helpless before the Philistines; with Jehovah's help, they routed the Philistines. The men of Israel certainly were not passive in this salvation. It has been argued, that if a man had to do anything to save himself, the man is his own savior, and God is left out. That theory is, that the man must be entirely passive when God saves him; but the truth is, God does not save the person who remains passive. If Israel had remained passive, they would have been overrun by the Philistines; but they did what they could, and Jehovah gave them the victory. "So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more within the border of Israel." This cannot mean that the Philistines never did at any later time come against Israel, for they made war against Israel in the days of King Saul. It must mean that this decisive victory over them kept them from renewing the attack at this time. That war was over. "And the hand of Jehovah was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel."

SOME REFLECTIONS

To those who do his will, God is love, and all that that expression implies; to the wicked, he is a consuming fire, and all that is implied in that expression. His dealings with the Jews prove this.

All reforms are brought about by teaching, and all acceptable service and worship grow out of teaching; but people must be willing to learn before there can be any effective teaching. What the children of Israel suffered under the oppression of the Philistines put them in the mood to listen to Samuel's teaching. Sorrows and calamities do not convert people, but may bring them to a frame of mind that causes them to give heed to the word of God.

What Samuel did shows what one man can sometimes do for a whole nation. He was a blessing to his nation, and to all others who have since been influenced by his example. And yet the world would never have been blessed by the life of this great man, had it not been that a childless woman prayed for a son; and then an obscure woman became a great blessing to her nation and to the world.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The need of teaching.

The condition of mind and heart necessary in one who is being taught.

Turning to God.

Confessing sins.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
Give facts about the Philistines.
Give facts about the early life of Samuel.
What was the condition of Israel at this time?
How came the ark of God to be among the Philistines?
Give its history while among them.
How was it brought back to the land of the children of Israel?
Where was it first brought?
To what point was it then moved?

Verses 3, 4

How came Israel to be conquered by other nations?
What did Samuel tell them to do that they might be delivered from the Philistines?
What would they have to do in turning to God?

Why could they not serve Jehovah and idols?

Why were they willing to listen to Samuel?

Verses 5, 6

Where did Samuel call a meeting?
What did they do when they came together?
How are reformatations brought about?

Verses 7, 8

Why would the Philistines seek to break up this meeting?
What did Israel ask Samuel to do?

Verses 9-11

What did Samuel proceed to do?
How was the victory gained?
Where did Israel stop their pursuit?

Verses 12, 13

Give substance of verses 12 and 13.
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XI—September 11, 1938

SAUL: MORAL FAILURE

1 Sam. 10: 21-25; 15: 20-23; 31: 3-6

21 And he brought the tribe of Benjamin near by their families; and the family of the Matrites was taken; and Saul the son of Kish was taken: but when they sought him, he could not be found.

22 Therefore they asked of Jehovah further, Is there yet a man to come hither? And Jehovah answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the baggage.

23 And they ran and fetched him thence; and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward.

24 And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom Jehovah hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, Long live the king.

25 Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before Jehovah. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.

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

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

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

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

30 And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers overtook him; and he was greatly distressed by reason of the archers.

31 Then said Saul to his armorbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith, lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armorbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took his sword, and fell upon it.

32 And when his armorbearer saw that Saul was dead, he likewise fell upon his sword, and died with him.

33 So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armorbearer, and all his men, that same day together.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"To obey is better than sacrifice."* (1 Sam. 15: 22.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 7: 21-27.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

September 5.	M.	The Selection of Saul (1 Sam. 10: 21-25)
September 6.	T.	Saul's Disobedience (1 Sam. 15: 20-23)
September 7.	W.	The Tragedy on Gilboa (1 Sam. 31: 3-10)
September 8.	T.	The Signs of the Times (Matt. 16: 1-5)
September 9.	F.	The Start and the Finish (Luke 14: 28-35)
September 10.	S.	The End of Moral Failure (Matt. 7: 15-19)
September 11.	S.	The Rock and the Sand (Matt. 7: 21-27)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—According to Hales, Saul was made king in 1110 B.C.; according to Usher, 1095 B.C.; according to Calmet, 1091 B.C. The second part of our lesson was perhaps twenty years later, and the last part was still later by about twenty years.

Places.—Saul was made king at Mizpah; Samuel rebuked Saul at Gilgal; Saul died on Mount Gilboa.

Persons.—Samuel and Saul. These are the main persons of our lesson, though thousands of others play their parts.

Lesson Links.—"And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. . . . And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted justice." (1 Sam. 8: 1-3.) This gave the elders of Israel an excuse to ask for what they wanted; so they said to Samuel, "Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." Samuel was not pleased with their request, and prayed to Jehovah about it. "And Jehovah said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not be king over them." However, by order of Jehovah, Samuel told them the burdens the king would heap upon them; but they said, "Nay; but we will have a king over us." Then Jehovah said to Samuel, "Make them a king." As the people had disrespected Samuel, rebelled against Jehovah, and were determined to have their own way, Jehovah would assist them in their downward course. "Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, . . . And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a young man and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he; from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." He was not a head and shoulders taller, as people generally say, but only from the shoulders and upward—to be exact, a head and neck taller than others. He is introduced here, because he is the one whom Jehovah had selected to be king. The incidents that led up to the anointing of Saul seem to have been of the most commonplace affairs, yet God's hand was in it all. Saul and a servant had started out to find his father's asses which had strayed off. Having failed to find them, they started back home. As they passed near Zuph, the servant suggested that they visit Samuel, who had come there to superintend the offering of sacrifices, and inquire of him about the asses. Jehovah had said to Samuel the day before, "To-morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be prince over my people Israel." Of course, it did not enter Saul's mind that God had anything to do with his going to see Samuel, till Samuel told him that God had selected him to be king. Samuel anointed him to be king before they parted. No one knew of this but Samuel and Saul. But God's will in the matter had to be declared in a public way so as to satisfy all the people.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Saul Proclaimed King (Verses 21-25)

Samuel called the people together at Mizpah, and reminded them, that, notwithstanding the great things Jehovah had done for them, they had rejected him, and had said to him, "Set a king over us." Samuel knew whom the Lord had selected to be king, but the people did not. He did not want to give any one grounds to think he was selecting their king. "Now therefore present yourselves before Jehovah by your tribes, and by your thousands. So Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken."

They would determine the matter by casting lots. The lot fell to Benjamin, the smallest of the tribes. Then the family of Kish was taken. Then the individual had to be determined. "And Saul the son of Kish was taken." At their first meeting, when Samuel informed Saul that he was to be king, Saul was astonished and modestly said, "Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou to me after this manner?" So Saul, knowing how matters would turn out, had hid himself. No one would likely be more modest than was Saul at that time. He really felt that he was not the timber out of which to make a king. It would be a sensation today, if some one who was to be inaugurated into a high office should hide himself when the time of his inauguration came. When the lot fell to Saul, he could not be found. "Therefore they asked of Jehovah further, Is there yet a man to come hither? And Jehovah answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the baggage." He was then brought before the assembly; "and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward." He was a fine specimen of physical manhood, such as to inspire confidence in him as a leader in war. "And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom Jehovah hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people?" It is well to notice that Samuel says that Jehovah had chosen Saul, for it has been argued that the people chose Saul and he turned out bad, but Jehovah chose David. The fact is, Jehovah selected Saul and had Samuel to anoint him before the people knew anything about it. When Samuel announced that Saul was the one whom Jehovah had chosen to be their king, the people shouted, "Long live the king." Before sending the people away, Samuel again told them the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it by the ark of God. He had told them what a burden to them their king would be, when they first demanded a king. That expense would be in addition to what the law already required. (See 1 Sam. 8: 10-18.) In addition to numerous rest days and sacrifices, the law required a tenth; and now, besides the additional burdens their king would heap upon them, he would require a tenth in taxes. Hence, the Jew had to give a fifth of his income besides many other sacrifices he was called on to make.

Saul's Disobedience (1 Sam. 15: 20, 21)

Within a short time after the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea in their flight from Egypt, the Amalekites made war on them. Because of this, "Jehovah said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." (Ex. 17: 8-14. See also Deut. 24: 17-19.) The Amalekites had kept up their enmity against the children of Israel; they had not repented. And now Samuel says to King Saul, "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, I have marked that which Amalek did to Israel, how he set himself against him in the way, when he came up out of Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." (1 Sam. 15: 2, 3.) However, Saul and his army, instead of carrying out God's orders, went about the matter in their

own way. "But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly." Evidently Saul thought he was carrying out God's orders in an improved way; for when he returned, he said to Samuel, "Blessed be thou of Jehovah: I have performed the commandment of Jehovah." When Samuel inquired into the matter, Saul tried to defend what he had done, but his defense only served to emphasize his disobedience. Saul was little in his own sight when he was made king, but he had grown in a feeling of importance, till he thought he had a right to change God's plans to suit himself; but in so doing he did evil in the sight of Jehovah. And yet Saul still defended himself, and insisted that he had obeyed the voice of Jehovah, though he knew he had not done exactly what Jehovah commanded. "But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the devoted things, to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God in Gilgal." When it finally dawned on Saul that he had actually disobeyed Jehovah, he said, "I have transgressed the commandment of Jehovah, and thy words, because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice." (Verse 24.) Saul was not a physical coward, but a moral coward. Here was his beloved army, who had braved the dangers of battle with him; he feared their criticisms and their displeasure. He had not the moral courage to go against their wishes. They wanted to make a great sacrifice at Gilgal—a sort of celebration of their victory over the Amalekites, and Saul did not have the courage to stand up against their wishes.

"To Obey Is Better Than Sacrifice" (Verses 22, 23)

Man's own wisdom is not sufficient to guide him. "O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. 10: 23.) Every effort to do so has, like Saul's effort, ended in failure. God delights in the man who has sense enough to turn from his own folly to walk in the wisdom that cometh down from above. "For all these things hath my hand made, and so all these things came to be, saith Jehovah: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word." (Isa. 66: 2.) To think up some big thing "to do for the Lord" is not obedience, no matter how much we may sacrifice in doing so. But the sacrifices that Saul and his army proposed to offer cost them nothing, excepting the trouble of bringing them to Gilgal. "Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah?" Then Samuel answered his own question. "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Saul had been king long enough to know the value of faithful obedience to authority. There was no excuse for his disobedience. The best thing any one can do is to obey Jehovah, and leave results with him. Offering all those fine animals that they had brought from the Amalekites would have been a spectacular performance, but making a big show is not obedience. Even today people need to learn this lesson. There are too many people seeking to make a big show in religion. "What doth Jehovah thy God require of thee, but to fear Jehovah thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve Jehovah

thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of Jehovah, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?" (Deut. 10: 12, 13.) It does seem that if people could learn that God commands them for their good, they would be ready, and even anxious, to obey him. Disobedience brings ruin. Adam's disobedience brought much ruin to the world; our own disobedience brings additional ruin to us. Disobedience is rebellion, and "rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim." Teraphim are said to have been idols used in divination. Because of Saul's stubbornness and rebellion, "Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death."

Saul's Death (1 Sam. 31: 3-6)

Soon after Saul's rebellion concerning the Amalekites, he began to have insane spells. David, who was destined to be king, was called to make music before him to quiet his madness. David became a useful warrior in Saul's army, and finally Saul became insanely jealous of David's popularity, and sought repeatedly to kill him; but Saul's son Jonathán and David developed an undying love for each other. The Philistines gave Saul much trouble during his entire reign. "And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul." (1 Sam. 14: 52.) But Saul's final battle came. The Philistines gathered a great force. (1 Sam. 28: 1, 4; 29: 1.) Saul was encamped in Mount Gilboa, "a mountain range on the eastern side of the plain of Esdraelon, rising over the city of Jezreel." Here the Philistines attacked Saul's army in great force. "And the men of Israel fled." The sons of Saul were slain. When Saul saw that he and his army were suffering a crushing defeat, and the archers were closing in upon him, he begged his armor-bearer to slay him, but he refused to do so. Then Saul took his own life, and his armor-bearer did likewise. It appears that Saul's army was completely destroyed.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Samuel was not entirely blameless in the matter of the kingdom. He had made his worthless sons deputy judges. This gave the elders an excuse to ask for a king, but it did not justify them in what they did. A wrong on the part of a person who holds to God's plan does not give others the right to change God's plan. Christians should think of this when they are about to create a stir in a church because some one has done a thing they consider wrong.

To change God's order is to reject him as king. Only by honoring his plans and laws do we honor him as king. Christ is our Savior, but he is our king also; and he will save no one in whose heart he is not allowed to reign as king. Think of this.

Some people cannot remain true to the right when wealth, or honor, or fame comes to them; and to be exalted to power and authority is more than the moral fiber of some can stand. While king, Saul gradually degenerated.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The life and character of Samuel.
The demand for a king.

Saul and his war on the Amalekites.
Saul's attitude toward David.
David's lament (2 Sam. 1: 17-27).

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
What excuse did the elders give for wanting a king?
How did their request strike Samuel?
What did Jehovah say to Samuel?
Tell how Saul comes into the narrative.

Verses 21-25

Where did Samuel assemble the people?
What did he say to the people?
Why determine the king by lot?
What peculiar thing happened?
What is said of Saul's height?
Who did Samuel say had chosen Saul?
Before the people went away, what did Samuel do?

1 Sam. 15: 20, 21

When did Amalek first make war against Israel?

What threat did the Lord then record against them?
What order did Samuel give Saul?
Tell how he failed to obey.
What did Saul say when he returned?
What cowardice did Saul show?

Verses 22, 23

Give passages showing man's need of divine guidance.
Repeat Isa. 66: 2.
What did Samuel say about obedience?
Why should Saul have known the value of obedience?
What did Moses say Jehovah requires?
What did Samuel say about rebellion?

1 Sam. 31: 3-6

Give some incidents in the life of Saul.
With whom did he have almost constant war?
Where was Saul's last battle?
Describe the result, and the manner of Saul's death.
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XII—September 18, 1938

JONATHAN: COURAGEOUS FRIENDSHIP

1 Sam. 20: 4-17

4 Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee.

5 And David said unto Jonathan, Behold to-morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field unto the third day at even.

6 If thy father miss me at all, then say, David earnestly asked leave of me that he might run to Beth-lehem his city; for it is the yearly sacrifice there for all the family.

7 If he say thus, It is well; thy servant shall have peace: but if he be wroth, then know that evil is determined by him.

8 Therefore deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of Jehovah with thee: but if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldst thou bring me to thy father?

9 And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee; for if I should at all know that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee?

10 Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me if perchance thy father answer thee roughly?

11 And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field.

12 And Jonathan said unto David, Jehovah, the God of Israel, be witness: when I have sounded my father about this time to-morrow, or the third day, behold, if there be good toward David, shall I not then send unto thee, and disclose it unto thee?

13 Jehovah do so to Jonathan, and more also, should it please my father to do thee evil, if I disclose it not unto thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and Jehovah be with thee, as he hath been with my father.

14 And thou shalt not only while yet I live show me the lovingkindness of Jehovah, that I die not;

15 But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever; no, not when Jehovah hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth.

16 So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, And Jehovah will require it at the hand of David's enemies.

17 And Jonathan caused David to swear again, for the love that he had to him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"A friend loveth at all times."* (Prov. 17: 17.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—2 Sam. 1: 23-26.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

September 12.	M.....	David's Confidence in Jonathan (1 Sam. 20: 4-10)
September 13.	T.....	Jonathan's Confidence in David (1 Sam. 20: 11-17)
September 14.	W.....	A Friend's Lament (2 Sam. 1: 23-26)
September 15.	T.....	Christian Brotherhood (Phile. 15-20)
September 16.	F.....	The Value of a Friend (Prov. 27: 6-10)
September 17.	S.....	Friends of Christ (John 15: 13-16)
September 18.	S.....	Friends in Christ (1 John 3: 13-18)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Between 1075 B.C. and 1055 B.C. The exact year cannot be determined.

Place.—Gibeah, in the territory of Benjamin. This seems to be certain, for Gibeah was Saul's home city (1 Sam. 10: 26), and Saul was at Gibeah soon after the incidents of our printed text.

Persons.—David the son of Jesse, and Jonathan the son of Saul.

Lesson Links.—Jonathan the oldest son of Saul appears in the record as the commander of a thousand men. The Philistines had overrun the greater part of the country of the Israelites, and had established garrisons in various places. Jonathan and his company slew the garrison at Gaba. (1 Sam. 13: 1-3.) This so stirred the Philistines that they came against Israel with a great army. The Israelites had not been allowed to have any implements of war. This Philistine army so frightened the Israelites that the most of them hid themselves or fled beyond the Jordan. Saul was left with a pitiful army of six hundred men. Jonathan and his armor-bearer planned to attack the whole army of the Philistines. Said Jonathan, "There is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few." Nothing more daring has ever been recorded in history or romance. How the two young men routed the great army of the Philistines is told in the fourteenth chapter. When the Philistines were put to flight, then thousands of the men of Israel came out of the caves and pits and pursued them. Jonathan had become such a hero in the eyes of Saul's army that they would not allow Saul to put Jonathan to death for violating a rash decree that Saul had made, a decree Saul made while Jonathan was chasing the Philistines and of which he knew nothing. A young man named David, the son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, came into Saul's service. The familiar story of how David slew Goliath is told in the seventeenth chapter. David then gave some account of himself to King Saul. "And it came to pass,

when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." (1 Sam. 18: 1.) No more steadfast and warm friendship ever sprang up between two men. One rarely thinks of Jonathan without also thinking of David. But Saul had become exceedingly jealous of the growing fame of David. He knew that Samuel had turned against him, and had told him that the kingship would be transferred to another family. He feared that David would be king. So he sought repeatedly and determinedly to kill David. But Jonathan never for a moment felt anything but the deepest love for David. Only two ways were open for David to keep from being killed by Saul; he could kill Saul or hide out. But he would not kill Saul. He had repeated opportunities to kill Saul, and would have killed him as he would have killed any enemy, but for one thing—Saul was the Lord's anointed, and he would not do violence to the Lord's anointed. He therefore chose to hide out, and let the Lord do with Saul as he saw fit.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Jonathan Renews His Pledge to David (Verse 4)

Read verses one to three. David came back from hiding to confer with Jonathan. He wanted to find out the cause of Saul's enmity to him, and whether Saul was still determined to kill him. He said to Jonathan, "What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?" But Jonathan assured him that he would not be killed, for his father Saul would do nothing without first telling him his plans. But David reminded Jonathan that Saul might carry out his purposes without letting Jonathan know his purposes. "But truly as Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death." "Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee." Jonathan, being great himself, knew the greatness of David, and therefore knew that David would not take advantage of such a pledge to ask him to do a mean or unreasonable thing. No greater confidence can a good man place in a man whose life is at stake than to promise to do any thing he requests.

Seeking a Harmless Plan to Save David's Life (Verses 5-7)

Neither Jonathan nor David wanted to harm Saul, but they did want to prevent him from carrying out his crazy impulse to kill David. And for Jonathan's safety it would have to be done in such way that Saul would not know about it.

The Feast of the New Moon.—The Jewish months were lunar, and began with the new moon. Special offerings were required for the first day of the month. (Num. 28: 11-13.) And the new moon called for some sort of a family feast, at which all were expected to be present. Hence, David said to Jonathan, "Behold, to-morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat." David knew that Saul would expect him to be in his place at the feast. David proposed not to attend the feast till he learned definitely whether Saul still determined to kill him. He would hide in the field till the third day at even. "If thy father miss me at all, then say,

David earnestly asked leave of me that he might run to Beth-lehem his city; for it is the yearly sacrifice there for all the family." So it seems that they had developed a custom of having a family gathering and a feast once every year. This was perhaps based on what is said in Num. 28: 11-13. David had a good understanding of Saul's moods; so he said to Jonathan, "If he say thus, It is well; thy servant shall have peace: but if he be wroth, then know that evil is determined by him." David knew that Saul had been so used to giving away to his mad fits that he would not hide his feelings, if he were angry because of David's absence.

David's Plea to Jonathan and Jonathan's Reply (Verses 8-11)

David felt the need of the greatest possible caution and diligence on the part of Jonathan. His plea to Jonathan touches one's heart even now. "Therefore deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of Jehovah with thee." Soon after David killed Goliath, he and Jonathan made a covenant. (1 Sam. 18: 3.) It was a covenant of Jehovah, because they had called Jehovah to witness their pledges of fidelity to each other. "But if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldest thou bring me to thy father?" If he had done anything worthy of death, he preferred that Jonathan kill him there and then. There was no need to prolong the agony by taking him to his father. Jonathan said, "Far be it from thee." Do not let such thoughts enter your mind; do not think for a moment that I think you guilty of any wrong. It was a mild rebuke by the best friend David ever had. Then Jonathan presented a searching question to David, "If I should at all know that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee?" Do you not know that my friendship and love for you would not allow me to fail to warn you of any danger that came to my knowledge? But another problem confronted David: "Who shall tell me if perchance thy father answer thee roughly?" David knew that Jonathan could not afford to endanger himself by returning at once to tell him; Jonathan knew that the matter must be managed in such a way that his father would not suspect anything. Jonathan had a plan in his mind, and asked David to go out into the field, so that he might lay his plan before David in the place where it would be worked out in such a way that Saul would suspect nothing.

Jonathan Makes a Solemn Pledge to Let David Know His Father's Purposes (Verses 12, 13)

He does not just now outline his plan, but makes a solemn pledge that he would let him know what he found out as to the purpose of his father; but he would first exact some pledges of David, as we shall see in the next section of our lesson. The plan is outlined in the verses following our printed text, which the student should read. To keep down suspicion Jonathan would start out with his bow and arrows and a lad as servant, as if he were going hunting, or were going out to engage in practice. David was to hide at a certain place, but even the lad must not know of his presence. He would shoot

three arrows, and send the lad to find them. "If I say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee; take them, and come; for there is peace to thee and no hurt, as Jehovah liveth. But if I say thus unto the boy, Behold, the arrows are beyond thee; go thy way, for Jehovah hath sent thee away." When the time came, the lad did his part without knowing that he was helping to carry out these pre-arranged signals. In all these things Jonathan was torn between a desire to be loyal to his father and to his beloved friend David. He knew that his father was in the wrong, and the kindest and best thing he could do for his father was to prevent his carrying out his murderous plans. When Jonathan had sounded out his father on the next day, he would certainly tell David the results; he would not be a party to leading David into any sort of danger. He then bound himself with a sort of an oath to be faithful in the matter. And then he made a statement that shows that he understood then that David was destined to be king: "And Jehovah be with thee, as he hath been with my father." He was all this time planning for the safety of David, when he knew that David was to be king, when, according to custom, he himself was the rightful heir to the throne. So great was his devotion to David that David's success meant more to him than his own. But this does not show a weakness in Jonathan; he was no weakling, as his record in war and his standing out against his father plainly show. He would rather be a friend to King David than to be king himself at the loss of David's friendship.

Jonathan's Covenant with the House of David (Verses 14-17)

In those days when some one other than a son in the royal family became king, he was likely to put to death all who might claim any natural right to the throne. Jonathan pleads that such be not his fate; and not only so, but that David would also be kind to his descendants forever. Jonathan knew that sooner or later God would destroy the enemies of David. It seems that he knew that such a fate awaited his father. "So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, And Jehovah will require it at the hand of David's enemies. And Jonathan caused David to swear again, for the love that he had to him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul." On the third day when Jonathan had given the agreed signals notifying David that Saul was still determined to kill David, Jonathan could not stand the idea of David's leaving without seeing him again; so he gave his weapons to the lad and sent him back to the city. In their parting they "wept one with another, until David exceeded." The last account we have of Jonathan before the battle in which he was killed is found in 1 Sam. 23: 15-18. Saul was still seeking to kill David. David was in the forests of Ziph. Jonathan slipped away, and found him, and strengthened his hand. "And he said unto him, Fear not; for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth. And they two made a covenant before Jehovah: and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house." This was the last time these two friends met. For an account of Jonathan's death in battle read 1 Sam. 31: 1-6. The student should also read David's lamentation when word came to him that Saul and Jonathan were slain in battle.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Covenants are usually made for the purpose of binding each party to discharge certain stipulated obligations, but Jonathan's covenant with David was different. It was a covenant of friendship in which each party was bound to accept whatever favors the other granted without feeling under obligation to return the favor.

Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, "There is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few." On that day Jonathan and his armor-bearer did more than all the hosts of Israel. Trusting in Jehovah they made a valiant fight, and put to flight the vast army of the Philistines. Even now a few faithful Christians are worth more than a whole country full of cowards.

It does not seem possible for a person to read the life of Jonathan without being made better. No lovelier character adorns the pages of history. His devotion to David was sublime, and his love was returned in full measure. David's lamentation over him and Saul is as beautiful as anything in Hebrew literature. The last words of the lamentation were for Jonathan alone—"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. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!"

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The victory of Jonathan and his armor-bearer.

The value of friends.

Jonathan and David.

David's lamentation over Saul and Jonathan.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
Who was Jonathan, and what is the first notice of him?
Who had subdued Israel?
Tell how Jonathan and his armor-bearer put the Philistines to flight?
What brought about the meeting of David and Jonathan?
What resulted from their meeting?
What was Saul's attitude toward David?

Verse 4

How had David been keeping out of danger from Saul?
What questions did David ask Jonathan?
What promise did Jonathan make David?

Verses 5-7

How did the Jewish months run?
Why would David be expected to sit at Saul's table at the time of the new moon?
What did he propose to do, and what did he ask Jonathan to say to Saul?

Verses 8-11

Repeat David's plea to Jonathan.
Give Jonathan's reply.
What other problem confronted David?

Verses 12, 13

How would Jonathan let David know Saul's mood?
How were Jonathan's feelings involved in the whole matter?

Verses 14-17

What plea does Jonathan make to David?
What shows that Jonathan knew that David would be king?
Give the remaining facts about David and Jonathan.
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XIII—September 25, 1938

DAVID: TRIUMPHANT FAITH

Psalm 23; 27: 1-6

- 1 Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want.
 2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
 He leadeth me beside still waters.
 3 He restoreth my soul:
 He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
 I will fear no evil; for thou art with me;
 Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
 5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
 Thou hast anointed my head with oil;
 My cup runneth over.
 6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness shall follow me all the days of
 my life;
 And I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah for ever.
- 1 Jehovah is my light and my salvation;
 Whom shall I fear?
 Jehovah is the strength of my life;
 Of whom shall I be afraid?
 2 When evil-doers came upon me to eat up my flesh,
 Even mine adversaries and my foes, they stumbled and fell.
 3 Though a host should encamp against me,
 My heart shall not fear:
 Though war should rise against me,
 Even then will I be confident.
 4 One thing have I asked of Jehovah, that will I seek after:
 That I may dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of my life,
 To behold the beauty of Jehovah,
 And to inquire in his temple.
 5 For in the day of trouble he will keep me secretly in his pavilion:
 In the covert of his tabernacle will he hide me;
 He will lift me up upon a rock.
 6 And now shall my head be lifted up above mine enemies round about
 me;
 And I will offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy;
 I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto Jehovah.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want."
 (Psalm 23: 1.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 101: 1-6.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

September 19.	M.	God the Provider (Psalm 23: 1-6)
September 20.	T.	God the Defender (Psalm 27: 1-6)
September 21.	W.	David Anointed (1 Sam. 16: 10-13)
September 22.	T.	David Awaiting God's Time (1 Sam. 26: 7-11)
September 23.	F.	David Enthroned (2 Sam. 5: 1-5)
September 24.	S.	David's Benediction (2 Sam. 23: 1-5)
September 25.	S.	Joy in the Lord (Psalm 101: 1-6)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—David reigned from about 1065 B.C. to 1025 B.C. It would seem that the most of the Psalms were written during this period.

Place.—Most likely Jerusalem, for that was David's city during the greater part of his reign.

Persons.—David was evidently the writer of the Psalms of our lesson, though some of the Psalms were written by other persons.

Lesson Links.—David, the son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, was the

youngest of eight sons. (1 Sam. 17: 12-14.) David first comes into view when Jehovah, having rejected the family of Saul as the royal family, sent Samuel to Bethlehem to anoint one of the sons of Jesse to be king. (1 Sam. 16: 1-13.) At that time, and for some time thereafter, David was a shepherd lad attending his father's flocks. He was not even invited to the feast till Samuel requested it. In that connection he is described as "ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon." David possessed great courage and physical strength. His language to Saul indicates that he was accustomed to killing lions and bears when they made raids on his father's flocks. (1 Sam. 17: 34.) David was a great warrior, a great musician, and a great poet. He was great in his zeal, in his faith, and in his devotion to all that pertained to Jehovah. Saul vexed the nations round about Israel; but David conquered them, so that his kingdom extended to Damascus and to the river Euphrates. (1 Chron. 18: 1-13.) He also drove the Jebusites out of Jerusalem and made that his capital city. (1 Chron. 11: 4-9.)

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

"I Shall Not Want" (Verses 1-3a)

"Jehovah is my shepherd." It was natural for David to write a Psalm like this. Shepherds with their flocks were common in Palestine; and David himself had been a shepherd. He knew the care shepherds bestowed upon their flocks. He himself had endangered his life in protecting his flocks from lions and bears. One who did not care for the sheep would not so risk his life. David's care for his flock reminds us of what Jesus said: "The good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep. He that is a hireling, and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf snatcheth them, and scattereth them." (John 10: 11, 12.) But David did not flee when a lion or a bear raided his flocks. His care for his flocks made him realize something of Jehovah's care for his flock, his people. "I shall not want"; that is, all my needs will be supplied. The good shepherd sees that his sheep are plentifully supplied.

Christ Our Shepherd.—"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep." To the elders of the church, the undershepherds, Peter said, "And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away." (1 Pet. 5: 4.) Jesus did not become our shepherd in order to supply our physical needs. They were supplied as abundantly before he came as after he came. "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." (John 10: 10.) He therefore is our shepherd to supply our spiritual needs. "For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." (1 Pet. 2: 25.) And he did make abundant provisions for our spiritual needs. "Seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue; whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust." (2 Pet. 1: 3, 4.)

Green Pastures—Still Waters.—"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside still waters." That is a beautiful word picture, suggestive of abundance of feed, cool shades, refreshing water, and quiet rest. The good shepherd looks after the comfort and well-being of his sheep. He leads them into places that satisfy the longings of the soul. If we follow this leader, he gives us rest by removing the burdens of sin and all harassing doubts.

Restores the Soul.—"He restoreth my soul." If a sheep strayed away, the good shepherd went after it and restored it to the flock. He would leave the ninety and nine and search for the lost sheep till he found it. If the sheep became sick, he restored it to health, if that were possible. These things Jesus our shepherd does for his sheep.

"I Will Fear No Evil" (Verses 3b, 4)

In this Psalm there is a mixture of the literal and the figurative; yet the change from the one to the other does not mar the beauty of the passage. "He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." For the moment the figure of the shepherd and the sheep is dropped, and a literal statement is made as to what Jehovah does for his servants. Righteousness is right doing; the path is the course of life one follows. The course of life the wicked follow is their path. "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and walk not in the way of evil men." (Prov. 4: 14.) That path, or way, leads to destruction; but the path of righteousness is the path of life. (Matt. 7: 13, 14.) "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; in thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." (Psalm 16: 11.) "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight." (Psalm 119: 35.)

The Shadow of Death.—"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." This does not refer to death itself, as so many seem to think. The Psalmist would hardly talk about walking through death. The term, "the shadow of death," is found several times in the Old Testament, and twice in the New Testament. It seems to refer to death in Job 10: 21, 22, but not in Job 16: 16, nor Psalm 44: 19. The Psalmist speaks of certain ones who sat in the shadow of death because of their rebellion, and they cried unto Jehovah and he saved them out of their distress. (Psalm 107: 10-14.) The expression here, as in Isa. 9: 2, Matt. 4: 16, and Luke 1: 79, refers to the darkness of sin and ignorance. In Jer. 2: 6 it refers to a region of dangers and perils. Though the Psalmist walked through the valley of the shadow of death, a region where dangers lurked on every hand, he would fear no evil; for Jehovah was with him. "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." (Isa. 41: 10.)

The Rod and Staff.—"Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." This seems to refer to the equipment of a shepherd, though the meaning is not clear. Rod cannot here mean the rod of correction, for certainly there would be no comfort in thinking that he might so fall into the wrong that the Lord would have to use upon him the rod of correction, or discipline. More likely the rod signifies an instrument for protection, and the staff a support in getting over

rough places and a support upon which to lean when he grew weary. For us now the word of God answers these purposes. With it we fight off the evils that beset us, and upon it we lean for support.

"My Cup Runneth Over" (Verses 5, 6)

The Psalmist continues to speak of God's care for his people, though he has dropped the figure of the shepherd and his sheep. The language does not describe how a shepherd cares for his sheep: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." The language shows how secure and undisturbed he is in the regular routine of living. Jehovah provides for him and watches over him while he, carefree, sits and eats in the presence of his enemies. This Psalm seems to apply especially to the whole nation of Israel, for Jehovah had led them and cared for them as a shepherd leads and cares for his sheep. When they were faithful to him, he had fed them abundantly in the presence of their enemies. "My cup runneth over." So richly did God supply his needs that he had more than enough. It is refreshing to read such statements as are found in this Psalm, for people are so given to murmuring and complaining. Yet God deals more generously with all people than they deserve. When God was feeding the children of Israel with manna in the wilderness, they felt that he was not dealing fairly with them, neither were they satisfied with the way God was leading them. "And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, and there is no water; and our soul loatheth this light bread." (Num. 21: 5.) "Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?" (Psalm 78: 19.) They complained and murmured, "because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation." (Psalm 78: 22.) And even in this present time those who really believe in God are assured that he richly provides for their spiritual needs, and are therefore fully satisfied with his gospel. In that confidence, they can say with David, "My cup runneth over."

David had had his trials, and at times things had seemed dark and foreboding to him; yet he could look back at his experience, and see that God had led him and blessed him through all his varied experiences; and he was assured that God would continue to do so. "Surely goodness and lovingkindness shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah for ever." David was not, like many people, worrying about the future. But David knew that he would have to be true to Jehovah, otherwise Jehovah would withdraw his loving-kindness. "All the paths of Jehovah are lovingkindness and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies." (Psalm 25: 10.) "But the lovingkindness of Jehovah is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his precepts to do them." (Psalm 103: 17, 18.)

"My Light and My Salvation" (Psalm 27: 1-3)

One of David's distinguishing characteristics was his unfaltering confidence in the power and goodness of God. "Jehovah is my light and my salvation." Jehovah is our unfailing light. He is the light

which no one can dim or destroy. He is the source and the cause of salvation. In many ways and from many dangers he had saved David. From him David had received strength to defend himself, wisdom to avoid dangers, and protection. He was therefore not afraid. His enemies had not been able to do him hurt. "When evil-doers came upon me to eat up my flesh, even mine adversaries and my foes, they stumbled and fell." Goliath was one of the many. Even King Saul stumbled in all his efforts against David. So long as Jehovah was with him he had no fear, even though a host encamped against him. In it all he was confident of God's help. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." (Psalm 46: 1.) "But the salvation of the righteous is of Jehovah: he is their stronghold in the time of trouble. And Jehovah helpeth them, and rescueth them: he rescueth them from the wicked, and saveth them, because they have taken refuge in him." (Psalm 37: 39, 40.) Great peace of mind comes to those who thus trust Jehovah.

"I Will Sing Praises Unto Jehovah" (Verses 4-6)

It does not seem that David had the tabernacle in mind when he spoke of the house of God, nor the temple, for it had not then been built in Jerusalem. Besides, neither the tabernacle nor the temple was built for people to dwell in. It rather seems that David was praying that God's presence might be with him always, as if he were actually dwelling in a house with Jehovah, so as to behold his beauty continually. The next verse bears out the idea that the language is figurative. A pavilion is "a tent; especially a large peaked tent raised on poles." Of course, Jehovah had no such literal tent, in which to hide people from trouble and danger, nor did he hide people in the tabernacle which Moses built. The language is figurative, expressive of God's care and protection for his people. Because of God's care for him, David's head would be lifted up above his enemies; that is, he would triumph over them. "He will lift me up upon a rock." This, too, is figurative, expressing his confidence that God would place him out of the reach of his enemies; they would not be able to dislodge him. Because of God's goodness and protection, he would offer sacrifices with joy; he would also praise Jehovah. "I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto Jehovah."

SOME REFLECTIONS

For beauty of expression the twenty-third Psalm is a literary gem. It is not cluttered up with extravagant and high-sounding adjectives. Many speakers and writers sin against good taste by an excessive use of adjectives. There are only two adjectives in the twenty-third Psalm, and they are of one syllable each—"green" and "still."

David sang God's praises. He believed in the power and the goodness of God. He loved God, and therefore loved his law. Said he, "Oh how love I thy law!" He had a deep reverence for everything that pertained to God. He even spared the life of his enemy Saul, and that solely on the grounds that Saul was the Lord's anointed. He would have killed Saul as readily as he killed other enemies, had not Saul been the Lord's anointed. "Jehovah forbid that I should put forth my hand against Jehovah's anointed." (1 Sam. 24: 6; 26: 11.)

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Why David would not kill Saul.
Absalom's rebellion.
David's sins and his penitence.
David's faith in Jehovah.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
Give the incident when Samuel first anointed David.
What is said of David's looks?
What of his strength?
How extensive did David's kingdom become?

Verses 1-3a

Why was it natural for David to write about Jehovah as a shepherd?
What did Jesus say about the good shepherd?
How did David measure up to this standard?
What does Jehovah as a shepherd do?

Verses 3b, 4

Discuss Jehovah's guidance.
In this connection, what is meant by path?
Give some scriptures on different paths.

Discuss the phrase, "valley of the shadow of death."
Why would David fear no evil?

Verses 5, 6

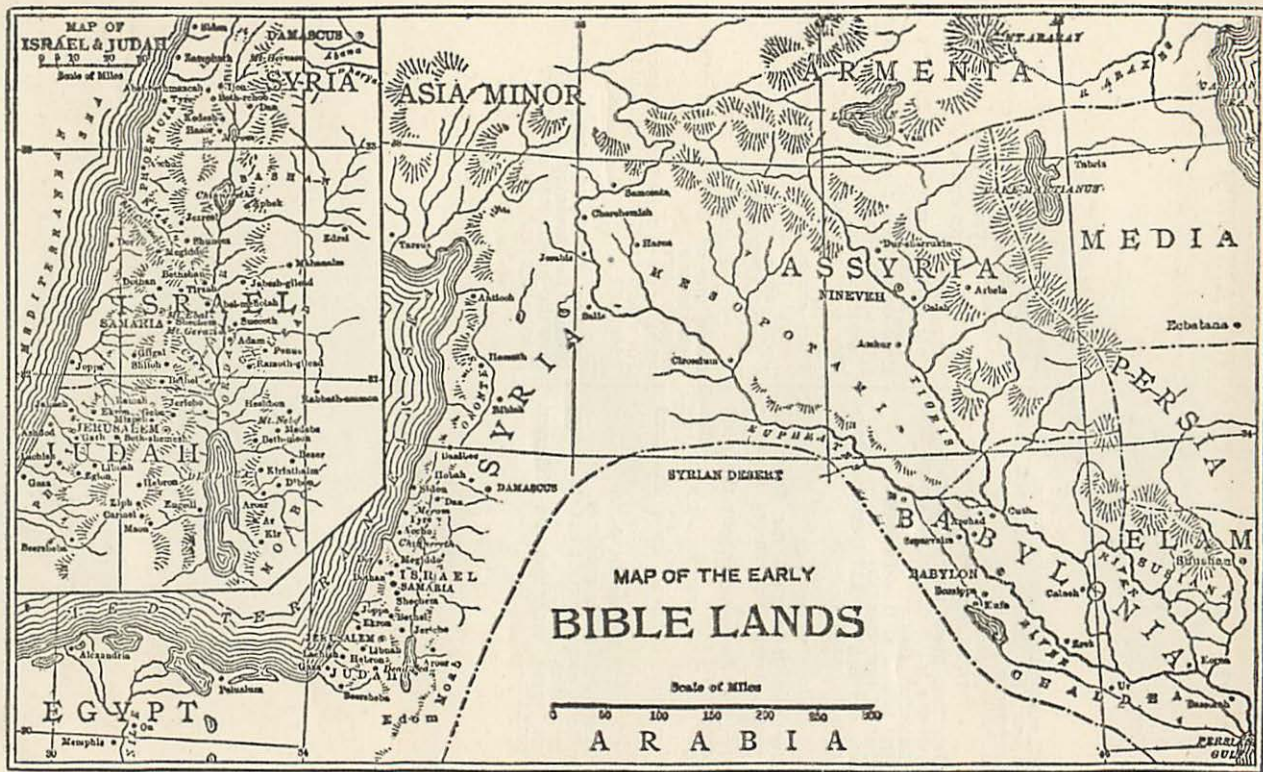
How does David speak of God's care for him?
How did he express the fullness of God's provisions?
How does David's expressions compare with what Israel said in the wilderness?
Can you mention some of David's trials?
What shows that he did not worry about the future?
Upon whom does Jehovah bestow loving-kindness?

Psalm 27: 1-3

Name one of David's distinguishing characteristics.
Discuss verse 1.
What happened to David's enemies?
To whom is God strength and protection?

Verses 4-6

For what did David ask?
Discuss his meaning.
How did he express his safety?
Discuss the reflections.



FOURTH QUARTER

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS

AIM: To help the student interpret the ten commandments in the light of the teachings of Jesus, and to apply them in personal and social relationships.

Lesson I—October 2, 1938

THE ONE TRUE GOD

Ex. 20: 2, 3; Isa. 45: 22; Mark 12: 28-34; 1 Cor. 8: 4-6

2 I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.

28 And one of the scribes came, and heard them questioning together, and knowing that he had answered them well, asked him, What commandment is the first of all?

29 Jesus answered, The first is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God, the Lord is one:

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.

31 The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

32 And the scribe said unto him, Of a truth, Teacher, thou hast well said that he is one; and there is none other but he;

33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is much more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.

34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

4 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.

5 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth; as there are gods many, and lords many;

6 Yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” (Deut. 6: 5.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 67.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

September 26.	M.	.....	The First Commandment (Ex. 20: 2, 3)
September 27.	T.	.....	The One True God (1 Cor. 8: 4-6)
September 28.	W.	.....	The Great Commandment (Mark 12: 28-34)
September 29.	T.	.....	Teaching the Commandments (Deut. 6: 1-9)
September 30.	F.	.....	Keeping the Commandments (John 15: 12-20)
October 1.	S.	.....	The God of All Nations (Rom. 10: 10-13)
October 2.	S.	.....	Delight in God's Law (Psalm 119: 97-104)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For Ex. 20: 2, 3, the following dates are given: Usher 1491 B.C.; Calmet, 1487 B.C.; Hales, 1647 B.C. For Isaiah 45: 22, between 770 B.C. and 700 B.C.; for Mark 12: 28-34, A.D. 30 or 31; for 1 Cor. 8: 4-6, A.D. 56.

Places.—The ten commandments were spoken from Mount Sinai; Isaiah prophesied in Jerusalem, Jesus spoke in Jerusalem, and Paul wrote to the church at Corinth from Ephesus.

Persons.—Jehovah, Isaiah, the children of Israel, Jesus, a scribe, Paul, and the church at Corinth.

Lessons Links.—"And let us know, let us follow on to know Jehovah." (Hos. 6: 3.) We will never fully comprehend God, for the finite cannot comprehend the infinite. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork," (Psalm 19: 1.) But the oneness of God, his perfections, and his plans concerning man can be learned only from what is revealed in the Bible. To the cultured Athenians Paul said, "For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, *To an Unknown God*. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you." (Acts 17: 23.) "The world through its wisdom knew not God." (1 Cor. 1: 21.)

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The First of the Ten Commandments (Verses 2, 3)

When the children of Israel came up out of Egypt, they were a race of idolaters. Nearly fifty years later Joshua said to them, "Now therefore fear Jehovah, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt; and serve ye Jehovah." (Josh. 24: 14.) This language shows that they had not entirely abandoned their idols even at the close of Joshua's career. Of course, there were some during all the years who believed in Jehovah. But it required mighty demonstrations to convince the masses that Jehovah was the God of might and power. Notice the wonders which Jehovah performed in Egypt and in opening the way through the Red Sea, and other wonders along the route to Sinai. There were awe-inspiring demonstrations on Sinai before Jehovah spoke the ten commandments. "And it came to pass on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud, and all the people that were in the camp trembled." (Ex. 19: 16.) "And mount Sinai, the whole of it, smoked, because Jehovah descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly." (Ex. 19: 18.) All these demonstrations were for the purpose of impressing them with the greatness and power of Jehovah, and that they should hear him and obey him, though neither of the ten commandments specifically mentions obedience to Jehovah. In those days the prevailing idea was that each nation had its god or gods. The masses of the Jews would have that idea. These gods were supposed to exercise power over certain lands and certain nations. This was perhaps the reason Jehovah reminded them that he was the God that brought them out of Egypt, else in

their ignorance they might think that other gods were operating in this Sinai country. We can scarcely account on any other grounds for his saying, "I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." He was their God, no matter where they might be. In effect he says, "Not only am I the God who brought thee out of Egypt, but thou shalt have no other gods before me. I am your only God." The first command is therefore a negative command, a prohibitive command, as are all the others excepting the fourth and the fifth. In effect the fourth is prohibitive, for God says of the Sabbath, "In it thou shalt not do any work."

"I Am God, and There Is None Else" (Isa. 45: 22)

Isaiah prophesied "concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." (Isa. 1: 1.) The nation was far gone in sin. Occasionally a good king arose and brought about a measure of reformation, but none of them could long turn the tide of national corruption. It seems that their own experience would have taught them the advantage of serving Jehovah, but not so. (They had added sin to sin till they had become a people laden with iniquity; their country was desolate, and their cities burned with fire.) (Isa. 1: 4-7.) They did not know where blessings could be found. Isaiah makes them out a very foolish nation. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." (Verse 3.) They did not know as much as an ox or an ass! These conditions give point to the exhortation of our lesson text: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." He alone could save them from their sins and corruption, and from their enemies. Their idols could not save. They had to be made and cared for by the people who made them. "They have no knowledge that carry the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save." (Isa. 45: 20.) "They bear it upon the shoulder, they carry it, and set it in its place, and it standeth; from its place shall it not remove: yea, one may cry unto it, yet can it not answer, nor save him out of his trouble." (Isa. 46: 7.) To emphasize the folly of depending on their idols to save them, Isaiah tells them that they would cut down a tree: with a part of it they would build a fire to warm themselves, with a part they would roast meat, and eat it; and with the remainder they would make a god, and worship it, and pray to it. (Isa. 44: 14-17.) This was to show them that they could expect no benefit from such a god, and that their only chance to be saved from their calamities was to return to Jehovah, and serve him; he alone was God.

A Scribe Questions Jesus (Mark 12: 28)

There was a continual controversy between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Sadducees did not believe there were angels, nor spirits; nor did they believe there would be any resurrection. The Pharisees believed all these things. The Sadducees had one argument that must have been a stock argument with them. With it they had doubtless often routed the Pharisees. A woman married seven brothers in succession; in the resurrection whose wife would

Levite violated in not assisting the wounded man. He was not their father, and therefore they did not violate the fifth commandment. They did not kill him, nor steal from him, nor bear false witness against him, nor covet what he had. Yes, they violated a command, but not one of the ten.

In creation God was the architect, the Son was the builder. God did not speak the world into existence. He commanded and the Son executed his commands. He made all things through the agency of his Son. "Through whom also he made the worlds." (Heb. 1: 2.) "He was in the world, and the world was made through him."

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Are the ten commandments a perfect moral code? *no*

Can people be idolaters without an image? *yes*

What caused the Babylonian captivity? *sins*

How we are redeemed through Christ. *by obeying*

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.

What do the heavens declare and fail to declare?

What does the Bible teach us about God?

What is the lesson of Paul's words to the Athenians?

Verses 2, 3

What was the religious condition of Israel when they came out of Egypt?

Name some things that were done to impress Jehovah's greatness upon them.

At Sinai why should Jehovah identify himself as he did?

Give the first of the ten commandments.

How many of the ten are negative commands?

Isa. 45: 22

To whom did Isaiah prophesy, and when?

What was the condition of the people?

Give some statements made in the first chapter about the people.

Discuss the verse of our lesson.

How does Isaiah emphasize the helplessness of idols and the folly of worshipping them?

Mark 12: 28

What was the difference between the Pharisees and the Sadducees?

What seems to have been the pet argument of the Sadducees?

What question did a scribe ask Jesus?

Verses 29-31

Give the answer of Jesus to the scribe.

What does this greatest commandment require?

What is the test of love for God?

Quote proof.

What does the next great commandment require?

Verses 32-34

What did the Pharisee say?

What did Jesus then say to the scribe?

When is a person not far from the kingdom?

1 Cor. 8: 4-6

Tell about Corinth.

Why did Paul mention eating meat?

What did he say we know?

Discuss verse 6.

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson II—October 9, 1938

SPIRITUAL WORSHIP

Ex. 20: 4-6; 32: 1-8; John 4: 19-24

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of *any thing* that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me,

6 And showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

1 And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him.

2 And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden rings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.

3 And all the people brake off the golden rings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.

4 And he received it at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, and made it a molten calf; and they said, These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

5 And when Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow shall be a feast to Jehovah.

6 And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

7 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, that thou broughtest up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves:

8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed unto it, and said, These are thy Gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

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.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4: 24.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 100.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

October 3.	M.	.....	The Second Commandment (Ex. 20: 4-6)
October 4.	T.	.....	The Golden Calf (Ex. 32: 1-8)
October 5.	W.	.....	Spiritual Worship (John 4: 19-26)
October 6.	T.	.....	Many Samaritans Believe (John 4: 27-42)
October 7.	F.	.....	Vain Worship (Matt. 15: 1-11)
October 8.	S.	.....	“If Any Man Thirst” (John 7: 28-39)
October 9.	S.	.....	Joy in Worship (Psalm 84: 1-12)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For references in Exodus, see preceding lesson. For John 4: 19-24, A.D. 28.

Places.—Mount Sinai and Jacob's well.

Persons.—Jehovah, Aaron, the children of Israel, Jesus, and a Samaritan woman. Aaron was the brother of Moses, and became the first high priest for Israel.

Lesson Links.—It has been said that man is incurably religious. It seems so, for all nations have some kind of religion. Nations to whom God has not been revealed have invented gods of their own. In the very nature of the case they must attribute to these gods traits of character similar to their own. They would, of course, suppose that the gods they invent would be pleased with the things that please the inventors. The system of religion connected with an invented god cannot be better than the people who invented it. They cannot put into their invented religion ideals of which they know nothing. Their invented religion cannot therefore be uplifting. People in this country do not worship the sun, moon, and stars, nor do they make images that they may worship them, but they do practically invent gods of their own. If a person will not accept God in the character in which the Bible reveals him, but fixes up in his own mind the attributes that he thinks God should possess, he is really making a god of his own. The Universalist, the Predestinarian, the Unitarian, and those who preach conditional salvation, have as diverse ideas of God and his attitude toward man as if they all had different Gods. And out of this diversity of ideas about God have grown different systems of religion. But if we do not accept God as he is revealed in the Bible, we do not really accept him at all. The person who takes from the things revealed in the Bible or adds to the things therein revealed, is making a religion of his own. Man-made religion, whether in this country or in heathen lands, is powerless to save.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Make No Images to Worship (Verses 4-6)

People may worship material things, such as the sun, moon, and stars, and yet make no images of them. The first command, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," prohibited such worship. Some make reason, or intelligence, their god. They profess to bow to its dictates alone. Some almost make a god of conscience. And we are plainly told that covetousness is idolatry. All such idolatry was prohibited by the first of the ten commandments.

The second commandment prohibited the making of images as objects of worship. It did not prohibit the making of pictures and models for other purposes. The plan of the tabernacle and its furnishings shows that pictures and images may be used as ornaments. On the mercy seat, which was the lid for the ark of the covenant, were two cherubim of pure gold. (Ex. 25: 10-22.) On the candlestick were images of flowers. (Ex. 25: 31-40.) Cherubim were worked into the veil of the tabernacle. (Ex. 26: 31-35.) Such passages as the following show that the prohibition of the second commandment related solely to the making of images as objects of worship. (Lev. 26: 1; Deut. 4: 15-19; 27: 15.) It is strange that

any one would be so low in intelligence as to think he could with his own hands make a god that would take care of him. Yet should we wonder too much? Some people in a civilized land, people who are supposed to be intelligent, will place a horseshoe over the door and trust to it for luck; or carry a rabbit-foot in their pocket for luck! To make a horseshoe or a rabbit-foot a god of luck seems about the limit of superstitious ignorance and idolatry.

The People Ask Aaron to Make Gods (Ex. 32: 1)

Soon after the ten commandments were given from Mount Sinai, Moses, at the command of God, went up into the mount to receive the two stones upon which were written the ten commandments, and tarried in the mount forty days and forty nights. (Ex. 24.) It must have been toward the close of this forty-day period that "the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him." How forgetful people are! In less time than two months they had forgotten the thunders of Mount Sinai and the command not to have any other gods, nor to make any graven images to worship as gods. All their lives they had been used to gods in Egypt. People are slow to break away from a religion that they have been used to all their lives.

Aaron Makes a Golden Calf (Verses 2-4)

It seems that Aaron would have rebelled at the people's demand; but, instead of rebuking them, he proceeded to carry out their request. "Break off the golden rings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me." When these were all melted together, Aaron fashioned it with a graving tool into the likeness of a calf. Though it had just been made, the people shouted, "These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." It does not seem possible that they thought the golden calf itself was the god that brought them up out of Egypt. Evidently, to them the calf represented some god or was the image of some god, for they could not have thought that the golden calf was the god that had brought them out of Egypt.

They Worship the Calf (Verses 5, 6)

To Aaron it seems that the calf he had made represented Jehovah, for he said, "To-morrow shall be a feast to Jehovah." To him the calf was a tangible and visible representation of the invisible Jehovah. Early on the morrow they busied themselves in making a great feast in honor of their new god. Some of the animals were offered as burnt offerings, and others as peace offerings. Some of the animals, or parts of them, were burnt, and the rest were eaten. It was a great feast in honor of the calf-god.

Jehovah Informs Moses (Verses 7, 8)

At first glance it seems peculiar that Jehovah should speak as he did to Moses: "Go, get thee down; for thy people, that th-

broughtest up," as if Jehovah had had nothing to do with bringing them out of Egypt; but the Lord wanted Moses to feel his responsibility toward them. "They have turned aside quickly out of the way." In this incident the unselfishness of Moses is shown in a striking way. Jehovah said to him, "I have seen this people, . . . now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation." To most men this would have been an alluring prospect, but not to Moses, for he loved his people. He spoke of what the Egyptians would say, if the people were destroyed, and then prayed earnestly for the people; and Jehovah spared them. (Verses 9-14.)

A Samaritan Woman (John 4: 19, 20)

Early in the ministry of Jesus, after he had been baptizing in Judea, he decided to leave Judea and go into Galilee. "And he must needs pass through Samaria." When he reached Jacob's well he sat down to rest while his disciples went into the city to buy food. Presently a woman of Samaria came to the well to draw water, whom Jesus soon engaged in conversation. From the knowledge he showed of her affairs she decided he was a prophet. She also knew that he was of the nation of the Jews, and supposed he would contend that Jerusalem was the God-appointed place to worship. Said she, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain." She referred to Mount Gerizim, on which the Samaritans had built their temple. They built up a lot of traditions around that mount that made it seem to them a very sacred place. "Gerizim is still to the Samaritans what Jerusalem is to the Jews, and Mecca to the Mohammedans." So it mattered not to a Samaritan, if a prophet did say that in Jerusalem was the place where men should worship. Even today people sometimes become so wedded to ways of their own that a plain statement in the Bible has no weight with them. "My father and mother believed so and so, and what was good enough for them is good enough for me." Verily the Samaritan woman has her imitators even in this land of Bibles. People who are earnestly striving to do the Lord's will never make such statements. With them it is not what our fathers did, but, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Must Worship in Spirit and Truth (Verses 21-24)

The Samaritans accepted only the five books of Moses. In giving laws during the encampment at Sinai Jehovah said, "In every place where I record my name I will come unto thee and I will bless thee." (Ex. 20: 24.) But as nothing was said in the five books of Moses about Jerusalem as the place to worship, and as Jerusalem did not become the permanent place to worship till David's reign, the Samaritans did not consider that a divine arrangement. Rejecting the testimony of the prophet David, as well as the other prophets, they were really not worshipping Jehovah, though they thought they were. Hence Jesus said, "Ye worship that which ye know not." When Jesus said that the hour was coming when they would worship neither in Jerusalem nor in Mount Gerizim, he did not mean that worship could not be rendered in those places, but that it would not be necessary to go to either place to worship. As the time for that

change was drawing near, Jesus did not spend any time arguing with the woman as to which was the God-appointed place for worship.

True Worshipers.—True worshipers worship in spirit and truth; the Father seeks that kind of worshipers. As there are true worshipers, there is also true worship. The Athenians worshiped God ignorantly; that was not true worship. If a man's religion was vain, so would his worship be. (James 1: 26.) Jesus quoted this from Isaiah: "In vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men." (Matt. 15: 9.) Vain worship is empty, worthless. And Paul speaks of will-worship. (Col. 2: 23.) Will-worship is self-directed worship. True worshipers worship in spirit and truth. True worship comes from the heart and is conducted according to the truth. Paul expressed a similar thought when he said, "For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son." (Rom. 1: 9.) Joshua exhorted Israel: "Now therefore fear Jehovah, and serve him in sincerity and in truth." (Josh. 24: 14.) Worship and service must therefore have these two characteristics: It must be performed in sincerity, and in harmony with the truth.

In Spirit.—There is danger that all worship degenerate into a mere formality. Worship that does not come from the heart is mere flattery, and flattery is lying. "But they flattered him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongue. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they faithful in his covenant." (Psalm 78: 36, 37.) David was speaking of Jehovah's own people. Ezekiel was a prophet, and the people pretended to go to him to hear the word of God. Concerning them Jehovah said to Ezekiel, "And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but do them not; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their gain." (Ezek. 33: 31.) Jesus calls such people hypocrites. "Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." (Matt. 15: 7, 8.)

In Truth.—Sincere devotion to God must be manifested in obedience to the truth of God. In fact, the sincere person wants to do what God says; if he does not want to do what God says, he is not sincere in his pretended service or worship. In the foregoing quotation from the seventy-eighth Psalm, David connects sincerity with faithfulness in God's covenant. To Ezekiel Jehovah said, "Her priests have done violence to my law, and have profaned my holy things." Jehovah then immediately explains how they had done this: "They have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they caused men to discern between the unclean and the clean." (Ezek. 22: 26.) The holy and the clean were the things that God had set apart for his service and worship; the common and the unclean were things they introduced. Bringing their own inventions into God's worship and service, thus mixing human inventions with divine requirements, was doing violence to God's law and making no distinction between their own inventions and the laws of God. They were profaning God, bringing him down on a level with themselves, in making their own inventions equal to his commands. This is by no means an uncommon failing

among religious people of today. All creed makers and all creed followers are guilty of this sin.

SOME REFLECTIONS

To live a clean life the spirit must constantly war against the flesh. Worship is intended to build up the spirit and to subdue the flesh—to help the spirit gain ascendancy over the flesh. To accomplish this, the worship must be spiritual. If the worship is arranged for entertainment, if it appeals to the flesh, it defeats its divine purpose.

Many churches have thought that some attraction must be added to the worship to draw the people, but have emptied their pews in doing so, for they have cultivated a taste that they cannot gratify. When churches enter into competition with shows, they are bound to fail. The theatres and movies can put on better shows. Why then go to a church meeting to see a show? The pious and godly find no satisfaction in seeing a church show, and so they stay away. And then church leaders wonder why the churches are empty and the shows full!

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Superstition—its causes and cure.
What Jesus taught at Jacob's well.
The sin of flattery.
The sin of adding to God's word.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
Who was Aaron?
Why is religion so nearly universal?
Why is invented religion worthless?
How do people in this country make gods of their own?

Verses 4-6

What does the first commandment prohibit?
What false gods do some civilized people have?
What does the second commandment prohibit?
What proof that it does not prohibit ornaments?
In what way do civilized people sometimes imitate the heathen?

Ex. 32: 1

Why was Moses in the mount?
How long did he remain?
What did the people ask Aaron to do?
Why did they so readily turn to idols?

Verses 2-4

How did Aaron carry out their request?
What did the people then say?

Verses 5, 6

What shows that to Aaron the calf represented Jehovah?
How did they honor their new God?

Verses 7, 8

What did Jehovah say to Moses?
What is peculiar about what he said?
What did Jehovah ask of Moses, and what did he promise Moses?
What did Moses say?

John 4: 19, 20

Tell what led up to these verses.
What convinced the woman that Jesus was a prophet?
What did she then say?
To what mountain did she refer?
What part of the Old Testament did the Samaritans accept?
Who now practically imitates this woman?

Verses 21-24

Repeat the reply Jesus made to the woman.
What did he say about true worshippers?
What is vain worship?
How is true worship rendered?
What is meant by the phrase, "in spirit and truth?"
Into what evil may people easily fall?
Read and discuss Psalm 78: 36, 37.
Also Ezek. 33: 30, 31.
What does Jesus say of such worshippers?
What is it to worship in truth?
Sincerity leads one to do what?
Read and discuss Ezek. 22: 26.
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson III—October 16, 1938

REVERENCE FOR GOD

Ex. 20: 7; Matt. 5: 33-37; 12: 33-37

7 Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain; for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

33 Again, ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God;

35 Nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black.

37 But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one.

33 Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by its fruit.

34 Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

35 The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things: and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

36 And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.” (Matt. 6: 9.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ex. 33: 17-23.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

October 10.	M.	The Third Commandment (Ex. 20: 7)
October 11.	T.	Reverence for God (Matt. 5: 33-37)
October 12.	W.	Make the Tree Good (Matt. 12: 33-37)
October 13.	T.	A Labor of Love (Luke 7: 36-50)
October 14.	F.	A Multitude Praise God (Rev. 7: 9-13)
October 15.	S.	Not Gold, but God (1 Tim. 6: 17-21)
October 16.	S.	The Holiness of God (Psalm 99: 1-9)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For Ex. 20: 7, see lesson one, this quarter. For Matt. 5: 33-37, A.D. 28; for Matt. 12: 33-37, probably A.D. 30.

Places.—Mount Sinai and a mountain somewhere in Galilee.

Persons.—Jehovah, the children of Israel, Jesus, and the people of Galilee.

Lesson Links.—In studying the lessons of this quarter, both the student and the teacher should have a clear conception of the distinction between the Old Covenant and the New. Great confusion results from trying to blend the two. The Old Covenant was made with the Hebrew people, and with no one else. If any others desired to become a part of the Hebrew nation, they could do so by being circumcised. (Ex. 12: 48-51.) Even a Hebrew was cut off from that covenant if he were not circumcised. (Gen. 17: 9-14.) Hence, before people of all nations could be brought into one covenant, the first had to be taken out of the way. “He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.” (Heb. 10: 9.) Both Jew and

Gentile could not be brought together in one church while the Old Covenant was in force. "For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." However, reverence has always been necessary. Reverence is defined to be "profound respect mingled with fear and affection; veneration." There is a great lack of reverence. Crime and irreverence are closely related. A hurtful theory sprang up some years ago, that children must be allowed self-expression. Now, a child is a bundle of appetites and passions with a will. * Self-expression means that the child's will must not be interfered with in his efforts to follow the promptings of his appetites and passions. It begets disrespect for authority; there is no place for the cultivation of reverence in that theory. Children must be taught to respect and honor the authority of father and mother. Reverence is a plant that must be planted and cultivated, or it will never exist; that process must begin in the home. Children who do not revere father and mother will not respect any constituted authority; they will not revere Jehovah. It is a crime against a child not to teach him reverence and respect for authority. Reverence is demanded in the New Testament as well as in the Old. "Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe." (Heb. 12: 28.)

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Against Taking the Name of God in Vain (Verse 7)

To take the name of God in vain is to speak his name in a light, irreverent, disrespectful way; also to make oath in the name of God to tell the truth, and then give false testimony. None of the names of Deity should be spoken in light, frivolous expressions. Of course the commandment which we are now considering was given to the children of Israel, but reverence for God has always been essential to acceptable obedience. "But speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine: . . . that aged women likewise be reverent in demeanor." (Tit. 2: 1-3.) "Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: for our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. 12: 28, 29.) In teaching his disciples how to pray, Jesus said, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." (Matt. 6: 9.) It is a petition that God's name be set apart and held sacred above all other names. To the children of Israel God said, "And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, and profane the name of thy God: I am Jehovah." (Lev. 19: 12.) It is as true now as it ever was, that to swear falsely is to profane the name of God; and yet if a person will go to the courtroom and listen for a while to the contradictory testimony given under oath, he will know that men often profane the name of God in giving false testimony. "This is one of the most atrocious and provoking crimes imaginable, though common among

us in this land to an inconceivable degree, so that it is little noticed unless accompanied with flagrant injustice!"—*Scott*. In giving false testimony under oath three sins are committed: A lie is told, justice is perverted, and God's name is profaned. The name of God is profaned when it is used as a byword in common conversation. And it is also grievously profaned in cursing and swearing. A striking example of the way God views such an abominable habit is furnished us in Lev. 24: 10-23. Two men engaged in a fight; "and the son of the Israelitish woman blasphemed the Name, and cursed; and they brought him unto Moses." He had violated the law, but no penalty had been attached to such violation; the law was therefore not enforceable. As they knew not what to do with the man, they kept him under guard till they learned the mind of the Lord. "And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him." And then Jehovah announced the penalty for all such violations of the third commandment: "And he that blasphemeth the name of Jehovah, he shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the sojourner, as the home-born, when he blasphemeth the name of Jehovah, shall be put to death." Reverence for Jehovah leads a person to have a wholesome respect for everything that pertains to Jehovah. Because of David's reverence for Jehovah, he would not slay Saul, because Saul was the Lord's anointed. And this reverence should keep one from speaking disrespectfully of the church, and from using God's name and God's word in common jokes.

"Swear Not at All" (Matt. 5: 33-37)

To forswear oneself is to be guilty of perjury; that was strictly forbidden under the Old Covenant. "When a man voweth a vow unto Jehovah, or sweareth an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth." (Num. 30: 2.) Hence, in making any ordinary vow or promise the children of Israel were allowed to bind themselves under an oath to Jehovah to fulfill the vow. It does not seem that Jesus is here speaking of proceedings at court, but the common habit the Jews had of making oath to their ordinary affairs—their vows and promises in conversations. On the expression, "Swear not at all," McGarvey has this comment—"The only oath authorized by the law of Moses was one taken in the name of God. (Deut. 6: 13.) The oaths which Jesus here proceeds to prohibit—'by heaven,' 'by the earth,' 'by the head'—were all unauthorized by the law. Moreover, it was taught by the scribes that these oaths, and all others which did not include the name of God, had not the binding force of an oath. The universal prohibition, 'Swear not at all,' is distributed by the specification of these four forms of oaths, and is, therefore, most strictly interpreted as including only such oaths. Jesus surely did not intend to abolish now, in advance of the general abrogation of the law, those statutes of Moses which allowed, and in some instances required, the administration of an oath. (See Ex. 22: 11; Num. 5: 19.) What we style the judicial oaths of the law of Moses, then, were not included in the prohibition. This conclusion is also reached when we interpret the prohibition in the light of

authoritative examples. God himself, because 'he could swear by none greater, he swore by himself,' in confirming the promise to Abraham (Heb. 6: 13); and he did the same in declaring the priesthood of Christ. (Heb. 7: 21.) Jesus answered to an oath before the Sanhedrin—Caiaphas administering the oath in the form: 'I adjure thee by the living God.' (Matt. 26: 63.) Paul also made oath to the Corinthian church, saying, 'I call God for a witness upon my soul, that to spare you I forbore to come unto Corinth.' (2 Cor. 1: 23; see also Rom. 1: 9; Gal. 1: 20; Phil. 1: 8; 1 Cor. 15: 31; Rev. 10: 5, 6.) We conclude, then, that judicial oaths, and oaths taken in the name of God on occasions of solemn religious importance, are not included in the prohibition; but as these are the only exceptions found in the scriptures, we conclude that all other oaths are forbidden. All these remarks apply with the same force to the parallel passage in James 5: 12." Verse thirty-seven seems to indicate that Jesus was talking about making light and frivolous oaths in common conversation, for he says, "But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay." When telling anything, a simple statement is sufficient; anything more than that is of evil. Hence, James says, "Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; that ye fall not under judgment." (James 5: 12.)

The Tree Is Known by Its Fruit (Matt. 12: 33-35)

Some of the force of this section of our lesson will be lost, unless we read the preceding verses, beginning with verse twenty-two. Jesus had healed a man possessed with a demon, blind and dumb. "But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This man doth not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub the prince of the demons." Jesus showed both the folly and the wickedness of their charge. If, as they charged, Satan was casting out Satan, then he was divided against himself, and his kingdom could not stand. In casting out demons, Jesus was spoiling Satan's goods. Now, a man cannot enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods, unless he first bind the strong man. But as Jesus was spoiling Satan's house, it follows that he had first bound Satan. "Therefore I say unto you, Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come." To blaspheme any one is to slander him or to speak of him in a derogatory way. The Pharisees were slandering the Holy Spirit in that Jesus was casting out demons by the power of the Holy Spirit, and they said he was doing it by Beelzebub. They were thus calling the Holy Spirit Beelzebub. Mark adds, "Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit." (Mark 3: 30.) But these Pharisees were showing what was in them—such an evil charge was a sample of the evil fruit they were bearing. In the sermon on the mount Jesus said, "By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Therefore by their fruits ye shall know

them." (Matt. 7: 16-20.) The tree determines the kind of fruit, and the fruit reveals the kind of a tree that bore it. In their evil and blasphemous talk about Jesus, the Pharisees were revealing what was in their own hearts. Jesus used some very plain language in telling them what they were: "Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Sometimes a person in ignorance may oppose a good thing; but these Pharisees knew that to heal a man possessed with a demon was a good work, yet they said it was the work of the devil. Being evil, nothing good could come from them. The heart is the treasure house, out of which either good things or bad things come, depending altogether on what is stored there.

The Determining Force of Words (Verses 36, 37)

Words are the vehicles of ideas, but sometimes the vehicles go out empty—idle chatter in which no ideas are conveyed. But the connection seems to indicate that the idle words of which Jesus spoke were evil words, and not simply pleasant nothings. The Pharisees had made a false and vicious charge, and Jesus was meeting that. Their words were empty of truth—idle in the sense that they were spoken without regard to the facts. For such words people will have to give account in the day of judgment. This language should serve as a warning against the too common practice of passing adverse judgment without considering all the facts. Such judgments reveal more of the character of the speaker than of the one on whom the rash judgment is passed. "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

SOME REFLECTIONS

"Take time to be holy." Take time to think of the majesty, power, and glory of God. Take time to think of his goodness and of your dependence upon him. Do this, and you will revere him more.

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things. To him be the glory for ever." (Rom. 11: 33-36.)

"Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore." (Jude 24, 25.) "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever." (Rev. 7: 12.)

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Taking the name of God in vain in false swearing.

The evils of profanity.

Using the name of God and sacred things in light, flippant talk.

The evils of hasty judgments.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
With whom was the Old Covenant made?
Might other people become members, and how?
Might a Hebrew be cut off?
Before people of all nations could be brought into one body, what was necessary?
Show that the Old Covenant ended.
What is reverence?
How is irreverence manifested today?
What has caused so much irreverence?

Verse 7

What is it to take the name of God in vain?
Name some of the ways in which people take the name of God in vain.
Give some New Testament teaching on reverence.
What are the evils of false swearing?
Tell about the man who blasphemed the name, and cursed.

To what does reverence for Jehovah lead?

Matt. 5: 33-37

What is it to forswear oneself?
What does the Old Testament say about false swearing?
Discuss the expression, "Swear not at all."
What admonition does Jesus give?

Matt. 12: 33-35

Give the points leading up to this section of our lesson.
How did the Pharisees blaspheme the Holy Spirit?
What did their unreasonable judgment show?
Discuss what Jesus says about the tree and its fruit.
How were the Pharisees bearing evil fruit?
What did Jesus call them?
What is our treasure house?
What comes from that storehouse?

Verses 36, 37

What are words?
What did Jesus mean by idle words?
How do our words reveal our character?
Discuss verse 37, and also the reflections.

Lesson IV—October 23, 1938

OUR DAY OF REST

Ex. 20: 8-11; Luke 13: 10-17

8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
9 Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work;
10 But the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:
11 For in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

10 And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath day.
11 And behold, a woman that had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years; and she was bowed together, and could in no wise lift herself up.
12 And when Jesus saw her, he called her, and said to her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.
13 And he laid his hands upon her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.
14 And the ruler of the synagogue, being moved with indignation because Jesus had healed on the sabbath, answered and said to the multitude, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the day of the sabbath.
15 But the Lord answered him, and said, Ye hypocrites, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?
16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had bound, lo, these eighteen years, to have been loosed from this bond on the day of the sabbath?
17 And as he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame: and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.” (Ex. 20: 8.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 84: 1-4.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

October 17.	M.	The Fourth Commandment (Ex. 20: 8-11)
October 18.	T.	The Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2: 23-28)
October 19.	W.	The Blessings of Sabbathkeeping (Isa. 58: 13, 14)
October 20.	T.	A Day of Rest (Ex. 16: 21-30)
October 21.	F.	Healing on the Sabbath (Luke 13: 10-17)
October 22.	S.	Teaching on the Sabbath (Mark 1: 21, 22)
October 23.	S.	A Sabbath Song (Psalm 122: 1-9)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For Ex. 20: 8-11, see the first lesson of this quarter. The incident recorded in Luke 13: 10-17 occurred in the last year of the public ministry of Jesus.

Places.—Sinai and some point in Perea.

Persons.—Jehovah, the children of Israel, Jesus, a woman with an infirmity, the ruler of a synagogue, and the multitude.

Lesson Links.—One of the things not easy to understand is the persistence with which people hold to the notion that the ten commandments are a perfect moral code and that they are still in force. If they constituted a perfect moral code, nothing better could have been given; yet Jesus plainly presents a higher code of morals. (Matt. 5: 21-27.) If the ten commandments are still of binding force, then people must still keep the Sabbath day holy. Sunday, the first day of the week, was never the Sabbath day. There is not the slightest hint in the Bible that the Sabbath was changed from the seventh day of the week to the first day. Besides, nothing is more plainly taught in the New Testament than that the whole Jewish economy—all that was included in the law—ended at the cross of Christ. The notion that there was a moral law and a ceremonial law—a law of God and a law of Moses—is without any foundation in Bible teachings. No such distinction as moral law for the ten commandments and ceremonial law for all the rest of God's law to the children of Israel is found in the Bible; nor is the effort to make a distinction between the law of God and the law of Moses founded on anything said in the Bible. The phrases are used interchangeably, as one may easily see by reading the eighth chapter of Nehemiah. The people came to Jerusalem for seven days of feasting; “and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses.” Others helped Ezra to teach the people the things in this “book of the law of Moses.” “And they read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly.” “Law of Moses”—“law of God.” In verses nine and fourteen it is simply “the law.” “Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God.” Any one knows that he did not put in seven days reading the ten commandments. In Neh. 9: 4 this same law is called the law of Jehovah their God. Hence, it is called the law of Moses, the law, the law of God, and the law of Jehovah. But the whole Jewish economy died. Read Paul's illustration and application in Rom. 7: 1-7. The people of this day had died to the law that they might be joined to Christ. They were discharged from the law; what law? The law he

was talking about included the command, "Thou shalt not covet," and that was one of the ten commandments. The law written on stones had given way to a more glorious law. (2 Cor. 3: 1-18.)

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Law of the Sabbath (Verses 8-11)

The requirements connected with the Sabbath law did not encourage idleness; yet it does not seem that the Lord required them to work during every day of the six preceding the Sabbath. All the work they did was to be done during the six days. They were to observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy; "in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates." No profitable employment—nothing that could be considered as work—was allowed on the Sabbath; it was a Sabbath unto Jehovah. "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day." (Ex. 35: 3.)

The Penalty.—None of the ten commandments, as first announced, named any penalty for violations. Now a law without a penalty is not enforceable, and is therefore in reality not a law. Such a law would be nothing more than advice, or a recommendation, to do the thing named. Penalties were announced later. "Six days shall work be done; but on the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a sabbath of solemn rest to Jehovah: whosoever doeth any work therein shall be put to death." (Ex. 35: 2.) What was done with one man who violated the law of the Sabbath is recorded in Num. 15: 32-36: "And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks upon the sabbath day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it had not been declared what should be done to him. And Jehovah said unto Moses, The man shall surely be put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him to death with stones; as Jehovah commanded Moses." The penalty was severe, but the Sabbath law was a test of their willingness to forego their own pleasure and convenience in order to respect the authority of Jehovah. One who defied the authority of God had no place among God's people.

To Whom Given.—In Gen. 2: 3 it is said that God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, but it is not said that he set it apart for a day of rest for man. Language used in connection with the law of the Sabbath seems to plainly show that the Sabbath was first given to the children of Israel after they came up out of Egypt, and while they were yet in the wilderness. "And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm: therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day." (Deut. 5: 15.) They were commanded to keep the Sabbath because God had brought them out of Egypt, and they were the only people he had brought out of Egypt. (See also Neh. 9: 13, 14.) "And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also

unto the children of Israel, saying, verily ye shall keep my sabbaths: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations." (Ex. 31: 12, 13.) If the law of the Sabbath was for all nations, it could not in any sense be a sign between Jehovah and the children of Israel, as any one can easily see. Again, "Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you." Nothing is said as to its being holy to other nations. Besides, the penalties for enforcing the Sabbath law applied only to the operations of the Hebrews themselves. The Sabbath law could not therefore apply to other nations, for there were no means provided to enforce the law among them.

Additions by Traditions.—Among the Jews there grew up a lot of requirements concerning the operations of the various laws and commandments, which they called the traditions of the elders. A number of these traditions concerned the Sabbath. It would be unlawful for them to reap and thresh their grain on the Sabbath. Tradition made it unlawful to pluck a few heads of wheat and rub them out in the hands—that was reaping and threshing! (Mark 2: 23, 24.) The law laid down no rule as to the distance a person might travel on the Sabbath, but tradition prescribed a limit, called a Sabbath day's journey. Out of the idea that healing the sick was work grew the tradition against practicing the art of healing on the Sabbath. Jesus honored the Sabbath, but paid no attention to these limitations imposed by the tradition of the elders; not only the Sabbath did he honor, but all the law. He lived under the law, and kept it so perfectly that he did no sin.

Jesus Heals a Woman on the Sabbath Day (Luke 13: 10-13)

It seems that Jesus did much teaching in the synagogues on the Sabbath day. One cannot imagine that he ever made a speech just to entertain his hearers—he taught. He was, of course, the greatest of all teachers. There must be teaching before there can be understanding, and there must be understanding before there can be any intelligent obedience. The writers record many miracles of healing performed by Jesus on the Sabbath day. It is not because he healed more people on the Sabbath than on any other day, but because of the controversy growing out of healings on the Sabbath. On this occasion a woman was present who had had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years. "She was bowed together, and could in no wise lift herself up." What sufferings and inconveniences she had endured these eighteen long years! Jesus called her to him. That he called her to come to him is plain from the fact that when he healed her she was near enough to him for him to lay his hands upon her. By calling her to him, he gave every one present an opportunity to see what a deplorable condition the woman was in, so that all might know what a great miracle of healing he performed. In simple, dignified language Jesus said to the woman, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." Then he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was able to stand straight. After all the years of suffering she had endured, is it any wonder that she glorified God for her relief? And it seems that any one with any sort of a human heart would have rejoiced with her. But religious bigotry robs people of sympathy.

The Ruler of the Synagogue Becomes Indignant (Verse 14)

In healing the woman Jesus had broken no Sabbath law, but he had transgressed the tradition of the elders. It is not likely that the ruler of the synagogue would have been so indignant had Jesus violated a law of God instead of the traditions of the elders. When men mix human inventions and doctrines with God's requirements, they hold to the human elements in their religion much more tenaciously than they do to what the Lord says. The average denominationalist will belittle God's command to be baptized, but he becomes indignant if you speak against some of the human elements in his religion. Some years ago a person was considered spiritual-minded if he insisted that baptism was of no importance, but he was a veritable heretic if he opposed the mourners' bench system of getting religion! When man's inventions find a place in a man's religion God's commands become secondary. On this point Jesus said, "Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men. And he said unto them, Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition." (Mark 7: 8, 9.) And the traditions of men meant more to the ruler of the synagogue than mercy for the suffering. "There are six days in which men ought to work"—he called this relief of suffering work. They ought therefore to come for healing during one of the six workdays, and not on the Sabbath.

Jesus Rebukes the Ruler of the Synagogue (Verses 15-17)

"Ye hypocrites." In that address Jesus included all who were like the ruler. "Hypocrite"—that is a harsh word; but Jesus would not have used it, had it not been the right word. It is a Greek word, and originally was applied to an actor on the stage. It therefore applies to one who pretends to be what he is not. Life is acting; we are all acting according to our own true self, or we are pretending to be what we are not. The ruler of the synagogue and his fellow Pharisees pretended great reverence for the law of God, but were in reality more devoted to their traditions. They were acting a part—they were hypocrites. They would see to feeding and watering their stock on the Sabbath so that they would not suffer, but were opposed to relieving the sufferings of human beings on the Sabbath. "And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had bound, lo, these eighteen years, to have been loosed from this bond on the day of the sabbath?" All sickness and suffering came as the result of Satan's deceptions. If the person did nothing to bring the sickness on himself, it is still a fact that Satan caused it all. In healing the woman Jesus was only releasing her from Satan's affliction. And his critics could say no more; Jesus had put them in an unfavorable light before the people whose good opinion they craved. Their effort to make a point against Jesus landed back on their own heads. While they felt the sting of what Jesus said, "all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him." Had not these critics been so blinded by their own prejudices, they would have known that, if Jesus was a profaner of the Sabbath law, he could not have wrought such a wonderful miracle. Any person not utterly blind would have seen his mistake and confessed it.

SOME REFLECTIONS

The Jews had the Sabbath; Christians have the Lord's day. Every day in the week belongs to the Lord, but there is one day that especially pertains to him—the day of his resurrection, just as every supper belongs to him, but there is one supper that is especially devoted to him. We are not to use the Lord's day as a common day any more than we are to use the Lord's Supper as a common meal.

No one has a right to set aside the Lord's day to be used to honor any person or thing. It is a sin and a shame that Christians will attempt to take the Lord's day and make it Mother's Day, or Father's Day, or Easter Day, or College Day, or Orphans' Home Day. Christians should have too much reverence for the Lord than to thus pervert the day that should be devoted to him. They might as well set aside one Lord's supper for such purposes.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

To whom was the Sabbath given?
The laws for Sabbath observance.
Was the Sabbath law abolished?
Jesus and the Sabbath.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
What evidence can you give that the ten commandments were not a perfect moral code?
Discuss the notion that there is a difference between the law of God and the law of Moses.
Give proof that the whole Jewish economy ended at the cross of Christ.

Verses 8-11

Were the people required to work every day in the week?
Give the Sabbath commandment.
Show that a law without a penalty is really no law.
What was the penalty for breaking the Sabbath law?
Give an incident of Sabbath violation.
To whom was the Sabbath given?—give proof for your answer.
How had the Jews made additions to the law of Moses?

Give some additions they made to the Sabbath law.
What did Jesus do about the Sabbath and their traditions?

Luke 13: 10-13

What was Jesus doing on the Sabbath?
What should be the effort of a pulpit speaker of today?
Why did miracles wrought on the Sabbath create disturbance?
Tell about the woman, and how Jesus proceeded to heal her.

Verse 14

What did the ruler of the synagogue say about the healing?
What evidence that people with a mixed religion hold to the doctrines of men more tenaciously than to the word of God?

Verses 15-17

What is a hypocrite?
What did Jesus say to the ruler and his fellow Pharisees?
What effect did his reply have on his critics?
What is said of the multitude?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson V—October 30, 1938

PERSONAL RIGHTS AND WHERE THEY END

Eccles. 2: 1-3, 10, 11; Rom. 6: 17-23; 14: 21

1 I said in my heart, Come now, I will prove thee with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also was vanity.

2 I said of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What doeth it?

3 I searched in my heart how to cheer my flesh with wine, my heart yet guiding me with wisdom, and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what it was good for the sons of men that they should do under heaven all the days of their life.

10 And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced because of all my labor; and this was my portion from all my labor.

11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do; and, behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was no profit under the sun.

17 But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered;

18 And being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness.

19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye presented your members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification.

20 For when ye were servants of sin, ye were free in regard of righteousness.

21 What fruit then had ye at that time in the things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

22 But now being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life.

23 For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

21 It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“What then? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid.” (Rom. 6: 15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Cor. 6: 9-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

October 24.	M.	.....	The Vanity of Possessions (Eccles. 2: 1-11)
October 25.	T.	.....	Freedom from Sin (Rom. 6: 17-23)
October 26.	W.	.....	Social Responsibility (Rom. 14: 13-21)
October 27.	T.	.....	Christian Liberty (1 Cor. 19: 23-33)
October 28.	F.	.....	Liberty, Not License (Gal. 5: 13-26)
October 29.	S.	.....	Love to God and Man (Rom. 13: 8-14)
October 30.	S.	.....	A Living Sacrifice (Rom. 12: 1-9)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—The contents of the book of Ecclesiastes indicate that it was written near the close of Solomon's long reign of forty years. According to Usher, Solomon died 975 B. C.; according to Calmet, 971 B.C.; according to Hales 991 B.C. Romans was written A.D. 58 or 59.

Places.—Jerusalem and Corinth. Paul wrote Romans at Corinth.

Persons.—Solomon and Paul. Solomon was the wisest of the Old Testament kings; Paul was the greatest of the New Testament servants of God.

Lesson Links.—In answer to prayer God gave Solomon superior wisdom. Solomon had asked for wisdom that he might know how to be a good ruler of God's people. "And the speech pleased the Lord. . . . And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern justice; behold, I have done according to thy word: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there hath been none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor, so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee, all thy days." (1 Kings 3: 10-13.) As to how Solomon had honor and riches, see 1 Kings 10. But Solomon married many foreign women. "And his wives turned away his heart." "For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods." (1 Kings 11: 1-13.) Then toward the close of his life he saw the folly of his course, and gave us the book of Ecclesiastes. In this book he shows the folly of living a self-centered life. Life finally sours on the person who attempts it. "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind." (Eccles. 1: 14, 17, 18.) Then Solomon begins to tell of the various efforts he had made to find that which would really satisfy the longings of his heart. "And I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also was a striving after wind. For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." Wisdom and knowledge, if sought and used for one's own selfish ends, will eventually prove to be a source of sorrow. Solomon had given up none of the worldly joys and comforts, and now he was a soured, but disillusioned, old man. What a contrast was Paul! Paul had given up every worldly advantage and all worldly goods that he might gain Christ. (Phil. 3: 7-11.) Yet he would glory only in the cross of Christ. (Gal. 6: 14.) And he could say, "I have all things, and abound." And the life he lived he gladly recommended to others. (Phil. 3: 17; 4: 9.)

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Solomon Tried to Find Satisfaction in a Gay Life (Verses 1, 2)

Solomon tried what is now commonly called "having a good time." He was not hampered in his efforts to have a good time by a lack of resources. He moved in the highest circles of society. The only limitation there was to his efforts to have a good time in festivity was his own capacity. Nature itself sets a limit on what a person can endure in gay living; that was the only limit Solomon had. For a man of such wisdom to try such a course of life seems pitiful and childish. "Solomon, having found knowledge and learning with all its discoveries, and the wisdom of this world with the reputation derived from it, to be labor, sorrow, and disappointment, deliberately proceeded to make trial of mirth and pleasure, in order to find out the happiest course in life. We may now, therefore, imagine him

surrounded with the most witty, gay, and dissipated of his courtiers and subjects; and endeavoring to relax his mind, and dissipate his cares, by feasting, mirth, and jollity."—Scott. There is nothing satisfying in such a course of life; that is, no permanent satisfaction. There is a certain amount of temporary pleasure in such sinful indulgences; the Bible recognizes this fact. "By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." (Heb. 11: 24, 25.) But he who abandons himself to fun and frolic must eventually pay the price; "for he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." (Gal. 6: 8.) A person has nothing to show for such dissipation except a burned out body. But Solomon's wisdom called a halt on that sort of life. When he took time to reflect on such a course of conduct, he saw that it was vanity—empty of any worthwhile thing. "I said of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What doeth it?" To put in one's time looking for something to laugh at is an indication of temporary insanity. And mirth—what permanent good can come of it?

Solomon Tried Drinking Wine (Verse 3)

It seems that Solomon put no restraints on himself when he was seeking satisfaction in mirth and jollity; but it seems that he tried drinking wine in moderation. In his drinking his heart yet guided him in wisdom; that is, he did not become basely intoxicated. If there was any satisfaction in wine drinking, he retained his senses sufficiently to know it. If there was any satisfaction in drinking intoxicants, some people become too drunk to know anything about it. It appears that Solomon, in doing what he did, had a design beyond his own personal gratification. "I searched in my heart how to cheer my flesh with wine, my heart yet guiding me with wisdom, and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what it was good for the sons of men that they should do under heaven all the days of their life." He was testing out worldliness to see what was in that sort of life, so that he might out of a varied experience be able to tell others what was good for them to do. He did not foolishly rush into things—his heart guided him in wisdom so that, if there was anything worth while in that sort of life, he would be able to discover it. He was guided by great wisdom and sustained by unlimited resources, so that he could try out to the fullest extent any course of life he chose to follow. No man therefore that ever lived was better prepared from actual experience to give advice as to the course that men should follow all the days of their life. He had traveled the road.

"All Was Vanity and a Striving After Wind" (Verses 10, 11)

The intervening verses should be read. Solomon built a fine royal palace. (1 Kings 7: 1-12.) He made an irrigation system for his parks and gardens. He had many servants to attend to all his wants. "Also I had great possessions of herds and flocks, above all that were before me in Jerusalem; I gathered me also silver and gold, and the treasure of kings and of the provinces; I gat me men-

singers and women-singers, and the delights of the sons of men, musical instruments, and that of all sorts." It will be seen that in all of Solomon's experiments, he did not forget how to rule the kingdom. For worldly glory and splendor his kingdom was unexcelled; but to attain that glory he heaped heavy burdens on his people, so much so that they demanded of his son that he make their burdens lighter. (1 Kings 12: 1-5.) In thus heaping burdens on his people to satisfy his own desires, he was going beyond his rights. "And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy." Whatever he wanted that money could buy, he bought it; but he found no satisfaction in the possession of the things he had desired. Having gained the things he desired, he could then properly appraise them. "Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do; and, behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was no profit under the sun." He had been too self-centered, and his much sought-after pleasures became vapid, tasteless, dull. He was a disillusioned, but soured, old man. "So I hated life, because the work that is wrought under the sun was grievous unto me; for all is vanity and a striving after wind. And I hated all my labor wherein I labored under the sun, seeing that I must leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he will be a wise man or a fool?" (Verses 17-19.) And it so happened that it did fall into the hands of a fool. If Solomon had not written by inspiration, but gave advice out of his abundant wisdom and rich experience, who would be better prepared to give advice than he? "This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Eccles. 12: 13, 14.)

"Ye Became Servants of Righteousness" (Rom. 6: 17, 18)

The Roman brethren had been servants of sin, but were not now. They were servants of righteousness. They had become free from sin by obeying from the heart the form, pattern, or mold of doctrine into which they had been delivered. "The original word 'tupos,' among other things, signifies 'a mold' into which melted metals are poured to receive the form of the mold. The apostle represents the gospel doctrine as a mold, into which the Romans were put by their baptism, in order to their being fashioned anew. And he thanks God that from the heart—that is, most willing and sincerely—they had yielded to the forming efficacy of that mold of doctrine, and were made new men, both in principle and practice."—*McKnight*. The mold of doctrine is something to which they had been obedient, and by that obedience had been delivered from the slavery of sin and had become servants of righteousness. By this obedience they had changed masters. It was not simply an inner change of the heart that had made this change, but obedience that came from the heart. Paul was thankful that this obedience from the heart had made them servants of righteousness.

The Wages of Sin—The Free Gift of God (Verses 19-23)

Because they were slow to comprehend spiritual relations, he uses the customs of men as an illustration to enable them to see that,

though they were not under the law, but under grace, they had no more liberty to continue to serve sin than a man had to continue to serve his old master after he had been transferred to another. Formerly they had presented their members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity. Uncleanness has reference to the degrading immoral practices so common among sinners, such as lewdness, drunkenness, etc. The word from which we have iniquity means lawlessness, and refers to their former attitude toward God. They did not regard his law. As they formerly lived an unclean and lawless life, they are now to present their members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification. They were to separate their members from their former worldly practices and dedicate them to the service of God. That is sanctification. In so doing they would present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well-pleasing to God. (Rom. 12: 1.) Verse twenty does not mean that formerly they were under no obligation to do right, for in that case they would have committed no sin in not doing right. They were free from righteousness in the sense that they were not righteous—not practicing righteousness. Now, as they have become servants of righteousness they should live as free from the practice of sin as they were formerly free from the practice of righteousness. As they got no real satisfying fruit out of their former practices, why should they want to keep on in such practices, even if they were not under the law? "The end of those things is death"—eternal death. But since they had become free from sin and had become servants of God, they had their fruit unto sanctification in this world, and eternal life in the world to come. Sin pays wages—God makes a free gift. The wages of sin will be paid in full; a man hires himself out to serve the devil, and the wages of such service is eternal death. But no man can perform service that will really earn eternal life as a reward; it comes as a free gift to those who love the Lord and serve him.

"He That Doubteth Is Condemned" (Rom. 14: 21)

If a man doubted the propriety of eating certain meats, he was condemned if he ate. He could have no faith in the propriety of what he was doing; he could not eat with a clear conscience; and to do such doubtful things is a sin. And a man should give up any of his supposed rights, rather than to do a thing that would lead his brother to sin. (Verses 15-22.)

SOME REFLECTIONS

People talk much about personal liberty, personal rights, but many times forget that it has its limitations. No man has a right to abuse his God-given powers. He has no right to impair his influence for good, and he certainly has no right to so destroy his health that he becomes a burden to others.

The range of personal rights is subject to variations. If you were alone on an island, you would have the right—the liberty—to shoot a high-powered rifle in any direction you might choose, but you have no such rights on the streets of a city. Your rights end where the other person's welfare and comfort begin. You have no right to do a thing that will injure another morally or physically. We must consider the good of others.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Solomon's wisdom.

What turned his heart.

His conclusion.

Obedience from the heart.

Paul's teaching on eating meats and drinking wine.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
For what did Solomon pray, and what did he receive?
What turned away his heart?
What seems to be the purpose of the book of Ecclesiastes?
What was Solomon's judgment on worldly things?
How did his old days contrast with Paul's?

Verses 1, 2

What were Solomon's chances for having "a good time"?
What did Solomon find in such a life?
Discuss the things that occur to you along these lines.

Verse 3

What did Solomon next try, and what was his method?
What did he find in such a course?
Why was he doing these things?

Verses 10, 11

Give Solomon's activities as outlined in the intervening verses.
To what extent did he go in his efforts to find pleasure in worldly things?
How did Solomon get the money for such glory?
What was the effect on the people?
Why did Solomon become soured on life?
Discuss his conclusion.

Rom. 6: 17, 18

Repeat Rom. 6: 17, 18.
What is it to obey from the heart?
How did they become free from sin?

Verses 19-23

Discuss verse 19.
What is sanctification?
Give the meaning of verse 20.
What is the fruit of a sinful life?
Discuss verse 23.

Rom. 14: 21

What was Paul discussing in chapter 14?
What does he say about doubting—doubting what?
What must a man believe about what he does?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VI—November 6, 1938

HONORING OUR PARENTS

Ex. 20: 12; Luke 2: 46-52; John 19: 26, 27; Eph. 6: 1-4

12 Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee.

46 And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions:

47 And all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

48 And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing.

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them; and his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

52 And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciples standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold, thy son!
 27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold, thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home.

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

2 Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise),

3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee.” (Ex. 20: 12.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Prov. 3: 1-7.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

October	31.	M.	.....	The Fifth Commandment (Ex. 20: 12)
November	1.	T.	.....	Jesus and His Parents (Luke 2: 46-52)
November	2.	W.	.....	Honoring Our Parents (Mark 7: 9-13)
November	3.	T.	.....	Jesus' Care for His Mother (John 19: 26, 27)
November	4.	F.	.....	Mutual Love in the Home (Col. 3: 12-21)
November	5.	S.	.....	Heeding Parental Instruction (Prov. 1: 7-19)
November	6.	S.	.....	God, the Keeper of His Children (Psalm 121: 1-8)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For Ex. 20: 12, see lesson one of this quarter; for Luke 2: 46-52, A.D. 8 or 10; for John 19: 26, 27, A.D. 30 or 31; for Eph. 6: 1-4, probably A.D. 61.

Places.—Sinai, Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Rome.

Persons.—Jehovah, the children of Israel, Joseph, Mary, John, Paul, and the brethren at Ephesus.

Lesson Links.—When God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, he promised Abraham to make of his seed a great nation. (Gen. 12: 1-3.) A people cannot develop into a great nation without wise and just laws. That the seed of Abraham might have the wisest and best laws possible, God himself gave them a system of laws. When they reached Sinai in their journey out of Egypt, God said to them through Moses, “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.” To these words the people replied, “All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do.” This covenant was therefore for the Hebrews, and for no other people. There can no distinction be made between the covenant and the laws of the covenant. Hence, everything announced from Mount Sinai and everything announced later through Moses was for the children of Israel, and for no other people. The preface to the ten commandments shows this: “And God spake all these words, saying, I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” Consider also this: “And what great nation is there, that hath statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?” (Deut. 4: 8.) “For he established a testimony in Jacob,

and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children." (Psalm 78: 5.) "He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his ordinances unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his ordinances, they have not known them." (Psalm 147: 19, 20.) The Gentiles had no law from Jehovah. (Rom. 2: 14.) The Jews were intrusted with the oracles of God. (Rom. 3: 1, 2.) Do these scriptures mean anything to the person who claims that the ten commandments were of universal application? But we shall see that the commandment of this lesson is made a part of the New Covenant. We shall gain this information from the last section of our lesson.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Fifth Commandment (Verse 12)

Neither of the ten commandments say anything about the duties and responsibilities of parents to their children. It seems to be taken for granted that the natural love of parents for their children will lead them to do what they think is best for them; any worth-while parents will do what they can for their children. Even animals, with few exceptions, care for their young. Children early feel their dependence on their parents, but the feeling of obligation to their parents comes later, and usually must be developed in them by proper training. They must be taught and trained to honor their father and their mother. At the same time, father and mother should make it as easy as possible for their children to obey this commandment. To that end they should conduct themselves in such a way as to deserve all the honor and respect that their children can bestow upon them. It is hard for children to honor a fussy, selfish, and indolent mother, whose chief effort is to get what she can out of her children; or one who bestows her care on a dog, and leaves the children to be seen after by a hired girl. And it is also hard for children to honor and respect a father who is brutal to them, or who is a drunkard, or an immoral wretch. And children will likely not be so rebellious toward their parents if the parents do not set them an example of rebellion by refusing to obey the Father in heaven. Nevertheless, the fifth commandment requires children to honor their father and their mother without naming any conditions or circumstances that would release them from that obligation. "There is a degree of affectionate respect which is owing to parents, that no person else can properly claim. For a considerable time parents stand as it were in the place of God to their children, and therefore rebellion against their lawful commands has been considered as rebellion against God. This precept therefore prohibits, not only all injurious acts, irreverent and unkind speeches to parents, but enjoins all necessary acts of kindness, filial respect, and obedience. We can scarcely suppose that a man honors his parents who, when they fall weak, blind, or sick, does not exert himself to the uttermost in their support. In such cases God as truly requires the children to provide for their parents, as he required the parents to feed, nourish, support, instruct, and defend the children when they were in the lowest state of helpless infancy."—Clark. "Children, under God, derive their being from their parents; and they are generally taken care of by them, with

much labor and expense and self-denial, during helpless infancy and inexperienced youth. It is therefore reasonable, that they should so long obey them unreservedly in all things lawful; and afterwards in all things which are not manifestly injurious to them, though they may be disagreeable. They ought to love their parents; to respect their characters, counsels, and instructions; to consult their interest, credit, and comfort; to conceal their infirmities; to bear with their tempers and humors, alleviate their sorrows, and rejoice their hearts as far as possible; and when they are grown old, or become in any way incapable of maintaining themselves, children are bound, if able, even to labor for their support, as their parents did for them, when infants. In all these respects, both parents are equally included; and should alike be honored and obeyed, and not in opposition to one another; which should teach the parents to set their children an example of impartiality, and to be harmonious in their conduct towards them."—*Scott*. "The annexed promise of long life to obedient children might have a peculiar reference to the covenant of Israel; yet, careful observers of mankind have noted its remarkable fulfillment in other nations. Subordination, in the family and community, tends to personal and public felicity; and the dislike which the human heart bears to submission renders it proper to enforce it by motives of every kind." Parents teach their children the importance of looking after their health and taking care of the body; this tends to promote long life. Other beneficial results come from honoring the parents; it promotes respect for the aged. It also develops respect for authority. The child must learn obedience. "Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered." (Heb. 5: 8.) If a child learns obedience as he grows up, he is more likely to make a law-abiding citizen, and be obedient to God.

Jesus and the Doctors of the Law (Luke 2: 46, 47)

"Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before Jehovah thy God in the place which he shall choose: in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles." (Read Deut. 16: 1-17.) The feast of unleavened bread was the Passover, or rather in connection with the Passover; the feast of weeks was later called the Feast of Pentecost. Women were not required to attend these feasts, but often did so. Joseph and Mary were accustomed to go every year to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of the Passover. When Jesus was twelve years old, he went up to the feast with them. At the end of the seven days of the feast, they started home. For protection and for company great crowds went together to these feasts. Supposing that Jesus was in the company, they traveled a day before they missed him. They returned to Jerusalem seeking for him. "After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions." "Some of the greatest doctors of Jewish history lived about this period—Hillel, Rabbi Simeon, and Gamaliel."—*Johnson*. In these schools both the teacher and the pupil asked and answered questions. His penetrating questions and his ready answers to their questions astonished all who heard him.

Jesus Obedient to His Parents (Verses 48-52)

Joseph and Mary were astonished to find him discussing questions with these great doctors of the law. Mary's question shows pardonable impatience: "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?" Naturally they had been extremely anxious about him—for three days they had sought him. To them it seems that he had been unmindful of their peace of mind; they did not know that he was far more able to take care of himself than they were. "How is it that ye sought me?" There is an implication here that they did not need to have put in all that time seeking him; they should have known where he was. They should have known that he was not gadding about and seeing the sights, nor into anything that he should not be doing. "Knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" For "in my Father's house" the marginal reading has, Greek, "in the things of my Father." This appears to have been intended to call to their mind his Deity. This they should have known, and did know; but in their anxiety for him they likely thought of him only as their natural son. But they did not understand the import of what he said. But he willingly returned with them to Nazareth, "and he was subject unto them." It was the law that he should be subject to them, and he was obedient to every demand of the law. While they did not fully understand him, "his mother kept all these sayings in her heart." She cherished them and pondered over them. "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." And we hear no more of him for a long stretch of eighteen years. Mark 6: 1-3 gives us an insight into what he was doing all these years of silence. The people inquired, "Is not this the carpenter?" Johnson quotes this from Schaff: "Jesus grew up among a people seldom and only contemptuously named by the ancient classics, and subject at the time to the yoke of a foreign oppressor; in a remote and conquered province of the Roman empire; in the darkest district of Palestine; in a little country town of proverbial insignificance; in poverty and manual labor; in the obscurity of a carpenter's shop; far away from universities, academies, libraries, and literary or polished society; without any help, as far as we know, except the parental care, the daily wonders of nature, the Old Testament scriptures, the weekly Sabbath service of the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4: 16), the annual festivities in the temple of Jerusalem (Luke 2: 42), and the secret intercourse of his soul with God, his heavenly Father."

Jesus Arranges for a Home for His Mother (John 19: 26, 27)

While Jesus was suffering the agonies of the cross there was standing by some of his faithful followers. His mother was there, and so also was the beloved disciple John. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved, he said a few words that meant comfort for his mother and a mother for his beloved disciple. "Woman, behold, thy son!" "Behold, thy mother!" That was enough—both understood him to be bringing them together as mother and son. "And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home." It is evident that Mary was a widow at this time, but we can feel sure that John took great delight in taking her into his own home.

The First Commandment with Promise (Eph. 6: 1-4)

It is the child's duty, under Christ and in deference to his law, to obey parents. In the very nature of the case this is right, and it is also right because the Lord binds that duty upon children. Hence, the child that rebels against the righteous demands of parents is rebelling against the Lord. To honor parents as parents, children must obey them. It is the first of the ten commandments that has a definite promise attached to it. It seems that Paul had in mind the command as repeated by Moses in Deut. 5: 16. If a person wants to go to a place over a road that is hard to travel on account of the fact that there are many roads leading in different directions, he will listen carefully to the directions of one who has been over the road; but it is hard for children to realize that their parents have been over the same road they are now traveling.

To provoke is to arouse—parents must not arouse the children to wrath, if it can be avoided. It usually stirs up the wrong feelings in a child to hold up another child as an example for him to imitate. A thoughtful child resents injustice; be just with your children. And above all, "nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." If parents can teach their children the word of God, and train them up in habits of industry, sobriety, truthfulness, and honesty, there is little to fear as to their future behavior.

SOME REFLECTIONS

"Train up a child in the way he should go"—but there is the rub. When you are doing your best, other influences of which you know nothing may be more than counteracting everything you can do.

Children should never be allowed to "talk back" to their parents. That sort of disrespect will grow on them, and they will cease to respect their parents. When the respect of the child is lost, parents need not be surprised at the worst of rebellion and lawlessness. Read what was required by the law of Moses to be done to a rebellious son. (Deut. 21: 18-21.)

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

- The law of Moses for the Hebrew nation only.
- Duties and responsibilities of parents.
- Duties and responsibilities of children.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

- Give time, places, and persons.
- What promise did God make to Abraham when he called him out of Ur?
- What is necessary for a people to become a great nation?
- Show that the covenant made at Sinai was for the Hebrew nation only.

Verse 12

- Repeat the fifth commandment.
- Discuss the natural feelings of parents toward their offspring.
- How can parents make it easier for children to obey this commandment?
- Discuss the honor and respect that children owe their parents.
- How long should children honor their parents?
- Show why it is necessary for children to learn obedience.

Luke 2: 46, 47

What feasts were Jewish men required to attend?
What is said of Joseph and Mary, as to their custom?
Tell about their search for Jesus.

Verses 48-52

What did Mary say to Jesus?
Why should they have known not to worry about Jesus?
What did Jesus say in reply?
What is said of Jesus after their return to Nazareth?

What circumstances surrounded him that would have been a hindrance to most ordinary boys or young men?

John 19: 26, 27

Discuss the incidents of this section of our lesson.

Eph. 6. 1-4

What charge does Paul give to children?
How may children honor their parents?
Why are children slow to take the advice of parents?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VII—November 13, 1938

THE SACREDNESS OF HUMAN LIFE

Ex. 20: 13; Matt. 5: 21-26, 38-42

13 Thou shalt not kill.

21 Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

22 But I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire.

23 If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee,

24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art with him in the way; lest haply the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou have paid the last farthing.

38 Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

39 But I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two.

42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Thou shalt not kill.” (Ex. 20: 13.) “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.” (1 John 3: 15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 11: 6-9.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

November 7.	M.	The Sixth Commandment (Ex. 20: 13)
November 8.	T.	The Sacredness of Human Life (Matt. 5: 21-26)
November 9.	W.	The Worth of Man (Matt. 18: 12-14)
November 10.	T.	The Law of Love (Matt. 5: 38-48)
November 11.	F.	Temples of God (1 Cor. 6: 19, 20)
November 12.	S.	The Universal Love (Acts 17: 24-28)
November 13.	S.	Man's Dignity (Psalm 8: 1-9)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For Ex. 20: 13, according to Hales, 1647 B.C.; according to Usher, 1491 B.C.; according to Calmet, 1487 B.C. For Matthew 5: 21-26, 38-42, probably A.D. 28.

Places.—Mount Sinai and a mountain in Galilee.

Persons.—Jehovah, the children of Israel, Jesus, his disciples, and the multitudes. From Matt. 7: 28, 29, we learn that the multitudes were present when Jesus preached the sermon on the mount.

Lesson Links.—A man is more than an animal. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . . And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." (Gen. 1: 26, 27.) It is this image of God that places man above the animals. That image may have been marred, but not destroyed, when man sinned. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." (Gen. 9: 6.) If the image of God in man had been destroyed by sin, he would be no more than an animal. It is because man bears the image of God that his life is more sacred than the life of an animal. Man cannot kill his fellow man as he would an animal. When men fail to recognize the fact that man bears the image of God, human life becomes cheap. Many today think no more of killing a man than of killing an animal. In some instances this disregard for human life is due to the notion that man is no more than a sort of superior animal, having arrived at that superior stage by a long process of evolution. If that notion becomes the controlling principle in a man's heart, he will take the life of a human being as readily as he would take the life of an animal. And why not? In his estimation we are only animals with no more right to life than a fish. If he does have more regard for human life than he has for the life of an animal, it is because he is not thoroughly under the influence of his theory. Any theory that cheapens human life encourages murder. That should be self-evident to any thoughtful person. Any theory that cheapens human life, and therefore tends to encourage murder, cannot be right.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Sixth Commandment (Verse 13)

"Thou shalt not kill." The extent and limitations of this commandment must be understood in the light of the whole law of which it was a part. In other words, it must be understood in the light in which Jehovah intended the Hebrews to understand it. In seeking to understand this command as it applied to the Hebrews, we must not interpret it in the light of any New Testament teaching, for they did not then have the light of New Testament teaching. Of one thing we may be sure, and that is, that God did not give them a command and then require them to violate it. There was an older law given, a law that was not limited to any race or nation: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." (Gen. 9: 6.) This law demands the life of the person who sheds man's blood, but it must be done by due process of law, or the person who sheds blood is a murderer. We will find, on examining the law of Moses, that the sixth com-

mandment did not contravene this older and universal law. The sixth commandment did not prohibit the execution of criminals who were found guilty of certain crimes. Of course guilt had to be established by a fair and impartial trial. The following are some of the crimes that were to be punished by death under the law of Moses: murder (Ex. 21: 12, 14), manstealing (Ex. 21: 16), sorcery (Ex. 22: 18), idolatry (Ex. 22: 20; Deut. 17: 2-7), profaning the Sabbath (Ex. 31: 14, 15), adultery (Lev. 20: 10), sodomy (Lev. 20: 13), blasphemy (Lev. 24: 16), and a number of others. Hence, the command, "Thou shalt not kill," did not prohibit the execution of criminals by due process of law. It should not therefore be quoted by any one as an argument against capital punishment. It prohibited murder—prohibited a man from killing a man on his own account and for his own purposes. And yet there were provisions made in the law of Moses that gave an individual the right to take human life without guilt. "If the thief be found breaking in, and be smitten so that he dieth, there shall be no bloodguiltiness for him." But if the thief escaped, the man was not allowed to hunt him up next day and kill him. (Ex. 22: 2-4.) Hence, a man was allowed to kill another in self-defense, but was not allowed to follow him up and take vengeance on him. That had to be done by the proper authorities. The foregoing points are mentioned, not to show what Christians should do, but to give some idea as to the scope and limitation of the sixth commandment. But under the New Testament the Christian is not to take vengeance into his own hands. "Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord." (Rom. 12: 19.) Paul here quotes from the law of Moses. God's way of taking vengeance then was, in part, through the government authorities. It is so now, as the student will see, if he will read on into the thirteenth chapter of Romans. The Christian is not to take vengeance on any man; let the government do that. The Christian must do good to his enemy.

Against Anger and Ugly Names (Matt. 5: 21, 22)

Jesus lived under the law of Moses, and kept it so perfectly that no one could convict him of sin. He taught his disciples to obey the law, and said that not one jot nor one tittle would pass away from the law, till all things were accomplished. Jesus was not therefore contradicting the law, but went back of the deed to the thoughts that gave rise to violations of the law. The law said, "Thou shalt not kill," but Jesus condemned the anger that might lead to murder. Anger is keen or hot displeasure because of some injury or supposed injury, and is usually accompanied with a desire to inflict punishment. Such a feeling may easily lead to murder, and should therefore be guarded against. A better understanding of all the circumstances might show that there was no real cause for anger. If you are given to anger, work against it as you would a dangerous disease. Do not try to justify your fits of anger on the grounds of temper. Your will power should be stronger than your feelings. Many hot-heads have worked on themselves till they became gentle and amiable. You cannot excuse yourself for violating the Lord's word. It is generally understood that "judgment" here refers to the sen-

tence passed by the Jewish courts. Raca was an expression of contempt, brainless, worthless. To call a brother, Raca, was to be in danger of the council, that is, the Sanhedrin, the Jewish High Court. Neither say, "Thou fool." The marginal reading says, "Or, Moreh, a Hebrew expression of condemnation." Jesus was warning against the use of ugly names. The habit of using rough expressions about people is all too common, for frequently such expressions do not express the truth. And if we indulge in such speech, the habit grows on us. The person who indulges in such practice is certainly not living up to the golden rule.

"Agree with Thine Adversary Quickly" (Verses 23-26)

Some of the things Jesus taught his disciples was meant to regulate their conduct under the law, and applied to people only in principle after the law ceased. An example: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat: all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe." (Matt. 23: 3.) We cannot follow literally the things said in this section of our lesson. The sacrifices the Jews offered on the altar were called gifts. If a man brought a sacrifice to the altar, and then remembered that his brother had some complaint against him, he was to leave his gift and go and make it right with the offended brother. If he had done his brother wrong, he could not render acceptable worship till he had made the wrong right. When he had made things right with the offended brother, he could then make an acceptable offering to God. Though we may not now bring a sacrifice to be burned upon an altar, who will say that the principle Jesus announced does not now hold good? If a Jew could not worship God acceptably till he made things right with a brother who had something against him, think you that a Christian can do so? Verse twenty-five shows that the offended brother was bringing suit, or about to bring suit, against the offending brother, and that he had grounds for the suit. He should make peace quickly with the offended brother, "lest haply the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison." Certainly a brother who has injured another in any way is in no condition of heart to worship God till he repents and repairs the damage in so far as he can. He must, if possible, satisfy the injured brother. He may have damaged him materially, or he may have slandered him. If the offending brother did not make things right with the injured brother, the offender could not worship God acceptably, and he was also liable to be cast into prison. It might have been a debt that the man owed and had refused to pay, or it might be that a fine had been assessed against him, which he refused to pay. (Deut. 22: 13-19.) In any case, he would have to remain in prison till he had paid the last farthing. If that is a type of what shall be the final doom of the disciple of Christ, who fails to right the wrongs he has done to others, his final doom would be sealed, for in the regions of the damned he would never have anything with which to pay. Christians should be careful to work no injury to any one. It is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong. "Why not rather take wrong? why not rather be defrauded? Nay, but ye yourselves do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren." (1 Cor. 6: 7, 8.)

Do Not Return Evil for Evil (Verses 38, 39)

The law of Moses had said, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." "And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbor; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him: breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be rendered unto him." (Lev. 24: 19, 20.) It is said that the Jews had so perverted this law as to justify private retaliation. But all such complaints were to be established before the proper authorities, and they were to assess the penalty. A charge could not be established by the testimony of one witness. If a man brought a charge against his neighbor, and could not establish the charge by competent witnesses, "then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to do unto his brother." (Deut. 19: 15-21.) Evidently Jesus was not seeking to countermand the demands of the law so long as it was in force, but was condemning their so perverting the law as to justify private retaliation. He would hinder personal broils. If a man injured them, they were not to take matters in their own hands and in a personal scrap try to inflict the penalty; let that be done by the proper authorities, as the law demanded.

Be More Generous Than Is Demanded (Verses 40-42)

If a man is about to bring suit against another, the presumption is that he thinks he has just grounds for the suit, though that is not always the case. In any case, if a man is about to bring suit against a man for his coat, it is better to give him the coat and cloak also than to stand the trouble, worry, and expense of a suit. Usually the one who gains a suit loses more than he gains. This is looking at the matter from purely economic grounds. And there are other considerations. Jesus forbids our settling personal grudges by lawsuits, and such suits usually generate more unpleasant feelings. "In those days, when there were no stages, railroad trains, postal lines, or regular means of conveyance, it was common for officers traveling to impress men to assist them on the route. It was a necessary, but oppressive, exaction. Christ directs to yield the service, and double it rather than refuse it."—*Johnson*. It is said that Palestine swarmed with the blind, lepers, and the maimed, whose only means of living was obtained by begging. They should not fail to give to such helpless people. Loaning to a neighbor who would borrow something is a neighborly act, and promotes good feeling. It is a selfish man who will loan nothing. Stinginess and selfishness have no connection with the Christian character.

SOME REFLECTIONS

We must have a wholesome regard for the welfare and comfort of others, as well as for their lives. No one has a right to make things unpleasant for others. People can disturb others in ways too numerous to mention.

Our ability to give to the needy is usually limited. We should therefore give as wisely as possible. The man who asks you for money to buy something to eat may want it to buy liquor. Take him to a restaurant, and see that he is fed. You might do him an injury by giving him money.

Under the law of Moses the testimony of two or three witnesses was required to establish guilt. (Deut. 17: 6.) The same principle holds good under the gospel. This was required because the accuser might give false testimony. But the requirement to have two or three witnesses applies only to human testimony, and not to testimony God gives.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Capital punishment.

The disregard for human rights and human life on the highway.

The sin of slander.

The Christian's obligation to the needy.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
Show man's preeminence over animals.

Why is it wrong to commit murder?
Why is there so much disregard for human life?

Verse 13

Repeat the sixth commandment.
In what way must we understand that commandment?
Give an older law on capital punishment.
What proof is there that the sixth commandment did not prohibit legal executions?
What, then, did the sixth commandment prohibit?
When did the law allow a man to kill another without due process of law?
Give Paul's teaching on this point.

Matt. 5: 21, 22

What was the attitude of Jesus toward the law of Moses?
What did Jesus warn against in

addition to the sixth commandment?
Does a high temper excuse rash deeds?
Discuss verse 22.

Verses 23-26

Show that some of the things Jesus taught applied only to people under the law.
If we have done a brother wrong, why should we make it right?
What if we fail to correct a wrong?

Verses 38, 39

What did the law say about punishment for injuries?
How had the Jews perverted that law?
How was such punishment to be inflicted?
If a man brought a charge against another that he could not prove, what was done?
What seems to be the purpose in what Jesus said?

Verses 40-42

What is best to do about a lawsuit?
What shall we do about giving and loaning?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VIII—November 20, 1938

THE SACREDNESS OF THE HOME

Ex. 20: 14; Matt. 5: 27, 28; Mark 10: 2-16

14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

27 Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery;

28 But I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

2 And there came unto him Pharisees, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? trying him.

3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?

4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.

5 But Jesus said unto them, For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment.

6 But from the beginning of the creation, Male and female made he them.

7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife;

8 And the two shall become one flesh: so that they are no more two, but one flesh.

9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

10 And in the house the disciples asked him again of this matter.

11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her:

12 And if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery.

13 And they were bringing unto him little children, that he should touch them: and the disciples rebuked them.

14 But when Jesus saw it, he was moved with indignation, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God.

15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein.

16 And he took them in his arms, and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Keep thyself pure." (1 Tim. 5: 22.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 92: 1-4, 12-15.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

November 14.	M.	.....	The Seventh Commandment (Ex. 20: 14)
November 15.	T.	.....	Jesus and Personal Purity (Matt. 5: 27-30)
November 16.	W.	.....	The Roots of Harmonious Living (1 Cor. 13: 4-8)
November 17.	T.	.....	"What Therefore God Hath Joined" (Mark 10: 9-12)
November 18.	F.	.....	The Christian Conception of Married Life (Eph. 5: 25-31)
November 19.	S.	.....	Safeguarding Future Generations (Psalm 78: 1-8)
November 20.	S.	.....	The Unseen Partner (Psalm 23: 1-6)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For Ex. 20: 14, see preceding lesson; for Matt. 5: 27, 28, probably A.D. 28; for Mark 10: 2-16, A.D. 30 or 31.

Places.—Mount Sinai, a mountain in Galilee, and some point in Perea.

Persons.—Jehovah, the children of Israel, Jesus, his disciples, the multitudes, the Pharisees, and some little children.

Lesson Links.—When God created man, he said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him." Not a helpmeet, as some spell it, but a help meet for him—a help suitable for him. Apparently it is no better for the woman to be

alone than it is for the man to be alone. The best development of character for both man and woman comes through the companionship of marriage, and through the responsibility of bringing up children. It is nature, and we cannot get away from nature. God intended for one man to have one wife. And neither is happy, unless the sacredness of their union is kept inviolate. The welfare of the family, the community, and the nation depends on the purity of the people. A nation cannot long endure when no regard is had for the sacredness of the marriage ties. If the home life is corrupted, the nation falls of its own weight. The religion of Christ is a good thing for the people of a nation, for it stresses the sacredness of the marriage ties. A civil contract may be entered into between the husband and wife, but marriage itself is more than a civil contract. It is a union of a man and a woman under the solemn laws of God, as well as of man. There is a growing tendency to treat the marriage vows lightly, which is not good for the nation. To treat the marriage vows so lightly is to leave God out of consideration. Not only are many married people loose in their morals, but divorces are increasing at an alarming rate. Our legislators cannot legislate for the church, but they should recognize the fact that God's marriage laws are wiser than anything man can originate, and that they are therefore better for the nation.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Seventh Commandment (Verse 14)

"Thou shalt not commit adultery." Adultery is defined as "unfaithfulness of a married person to the marriage bed." But if we do not allow that the word adultery here includes also fornication, then there is no prohibition in the ten commandments against unchastity in unmarried people. There are no provisions in the ten commandments for the enforcement of any of its demands. The penalties for any violation of these commandments are found in what some people choose to call the ceremonial law. "And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death." (Lev. 20: 10.) That was a severe penalty, but later in their history the Hebrews did not rigidly enforce the penalty, and much corruption resulted.

Adultery in the Heart (Matt. 5: 27, 28)

Jesus did not countermand the law against adultery; he extended it so as to include the thoughts of the heart. The law of Moses dealt with the act; Jesus deals with the thoughts and desires of the heart. The law of Moses did not make adultery include the desires of the heart; for the judges, whose duty it was to enforce the law, could not know the condition of the heart, save as it expressed itself in action. But God, the heart searcher, knows the condition of the heart, and can therefore judge accurately the thoughts, desires, and motives of the heart, as well as he can judge the deeds of the body. The desires and motives of the heart determine character. If a man desires money more than he desires to do right, he is dishonest, and lacks only an opportunity to commit fraud. It is true that his

desires do not injure the other person as much as his deeds would, but they injure his own character. And if a man lusts after a woman, though he lacks opportunity to carry out his lustful desires, he is an adulterer. Adultery here includes all lewdness, whether the man be married or unmarried. Notice the language: "Every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." "Every one" includes the married and the unmarried. "A woman"—any woman, whether married or unmarried. And so it is seen that the language of the Bible does not keep up a clear distinction between adultery and fornication.

The Pharisees Question Jesus About Divorce (Mark 10: 2-5)

"And there came unto him Pharisees." They would not leave Jesus alone. They would not believe in him, but they could not be indifferent to him. As they would not be his disciples, they must be his enemies. Jesus challenges men to action now as then. Infidels cannot dismiss him with a wave of the hand, and pass on with indifference. We may wonder at men's unbelief, but not at the hostility of the unbeliever. "He that is not with me is against me." There is no neutral ground for a really live man. The Pharisees were shrewd and resourceful, but had never fully satisfied themselves in their various discussions with Jesus. Now they have thought up something else. "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? trying him." Matthew's report has, "for every cause." That is, can a man put away his wife if she, for any cause, does not please him? On this point the two great religious schools of thought among the Jews at that time, the schools of Shammai and Hillel, differed radically. The controversy raged over what Moses meant by "unseemly thing" in Deut. 24: 1: "When a man taketh a wife, and marrieth her, then it shall be, if she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her, that he shall write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house." Shammai held that "unseemly thing" referred to adultery; Hillel held that it meant anything with which a husband might be displeased, even to overcooking or oversalting his food. Evidently these Pharisees thought Jesus would have to answer their question in a way that one or the other of these schools would be against him. At least, we know that the Pharisees were not seeking information, but "trying him." Jesus was not interested in what Shammai and Hillel taught, but he sought an expression from his questioners. "What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away." They evaded the point as to the grounds on which divorce might be granted under the law; but the reply Jesus made shows that the law of Moses allowed divorce on more grounds than one. "For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment." This liberal divorce law should not have filled the Jews with pride; it was really a fearful indictment of them—liberal because of the hardness of their hearts. On account of their brutality Moses had allowed them to divorce a helpless woman to keep them from continually abusing a wife who had lost their favor, and perhaps to keep them from secretly putting her to death. It was given in mercy for the women. The law was as high a standard as they would live up to. To be enforced, a law must be

in the moral reach of those for whom it is made. Disregarding this absolutely essential principle of legislation, infidels have sought to discredit the morals of the law of Moses.

The Original Marriage Law (Verses 6-9)

"But from the beginning of the creation, Male and female made he them." It has been pointed out that the sense here would have been plainer and more accurately expressed, had the translators given it as follows: "A male and a female made he them." It is a fact that he did make a male and a female. The marriage relation is based on the fact that God made a male and a female. God had a high and holy purpose in so doing, and when a male and a female cooperate with God in carrying out his designs, they are engaged in a high and holy mission. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife." This language does not mean that a married person must give up all thought of his parents, but that the marriage relation is closer and more intimate than the relation of child to parents. "And shall cleave to his wife." He is not to enter into some kind of a contract with a woman to live together so long as the arrangement may be convenient, but to cleave to her—glue himself to her, for so is the force of the Greek. It enjoins upon both parties to the marriage the duty of making an earnest effort to live together in peace. Too many people shut their eyes to the faults of the other before the marriage, and then hunt for faults after the marriage. In their most intimate union as husband and wife the two become one flesh, and in their child their two natures are joined in one. God ordained marriage, and his seal is placed upon the marriage vow; and that seal can be broken only in the way, or ways, God has pointed out. Out of the marriage vow grows the home. To make a home is the instinctive desire of every normal person.

The Disciples Ask for More Light (Verses 10-12)

Perhaps the disciples felt that Jesus had left no grounds for divorce. But Jesus had only been laying down the general principles and purposes of the marriage relation. God had intended that the man and the woman should become one, and that their marriage vows should be sacredly kept; but it sometimes happens that one of the contracting parties runs off with another: what then is to be done? Jesus answers: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery." (Matt. 19: 9.) If this cause for divorce does not exist, then "whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her: and if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery." Another possible grounds for divorce is given in 1 Cor. 7: 15: "Yet if the unbelieving departeth, let him depart: the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases." If the believer, in such cases, is not entirely released from the marriage bonds, if they still hold him in check and govern his actions, he is still under bondage. Paul's

language is emphatic. A general law is first laid down, and the exceptions, if there are any, are given; that is true in all systems of laws.

Jesus Blesses Little Children (Verses 13-16)

No other persons would be so likely to bring the children to Jesus as their own parents. It is said that parents sometimes brought their children to the head man of the synagogue that he might bless them. It was natural therefore for these parents to bring their children to the Great Teacher, that he might, as Matthew reports, lay his hands on them and pray. The great task for parents today is to bring their children to Jesus in a moral and spiritual sense. But the disciples rebuked these parents. They evidently thought Jesus would not want to be bothered with these parents and children. How little they knew their Master! When Jesus saw their interference, "he was moved with indignation." Children in the home and the love and care of parents for their children meant much to Jesus. It angered him for his own disciples to rudely drive parents and children from him. "Suffer the little children to come unto me." The children were brought, and yet they came. It happens now that the people who are brought to Christ must themselves do the coming. It is singular that any one should seize on this incident as proof for infant sprinkling, for not a hint of such practice is given. Had Jesus and his apostles been in the habit of sprinkling infants, the disciples would have been exhorting the parents to bring their children, instead of seeking to send them away. It is strange that these advocates of infant sprinkling will hunt so persistently for scripture to prove that it is not necessary to baptize adults, and then hunt as persistently for scripture to prove that infants ought to be baptized.

SOME REFLECTIONS

When two people marry, their future happiness depends greatly on the regard each one has for the feelings, desires, and needs of the other. Selfishness is at the bottom of most of the trouble between married people.

Too many people try to evade the natural results and responsibilities of the married relation. In seeking to evade the responsibilities of parenthood, they cheat themselves out of much of the joys of life. When a home is blessed by children, they serve as links to bind the parents closer together. God's plan cannot be avoided without sin and trouble.

"For to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven." In another place (Matt. 18: 1-4) Jesus teaches that we must become as little children, or we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven; and that "whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." One of the marked characteristics of little children is their trustfulness—their dependence on their parents for protection. If a person is humble, he trusts God.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The need of morality.

The divorce evil—its cause.

What is a Christian home?

The kind of character essential to enter the kingdom.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
Give the origin of marriage.
Discuss the things that depend on holding the marriage vows sacred.

Verse 14

Repeat the seventh commandment.
What was the penalty for violating this commandment?

Matt. 5: 27, 28

What extension did Jesus make to the seventh commandment?
Why are evil desires and motives wrong and harmful?

Mark 10: 2-5

Why could not the enemies of Jesus treat him with indifference?

What was the question of the Pharisees?

Why did they ask the question?
Why did the law of Moses make divorce easy?
Why are not some laws enforced?

Verses 6-9

What did Jesus say of the matter as it was in the beginning?
Discuss the binding force of the marriage vows.

Verses 10-12

Are there any grounds for divorce and remarriage?
Discuss 1 Cor. 7: 15.

Verses 13-16

Why were children brought to Jesus?
Why was Jesus moved with indignation?
Discuss what he said about little children.
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IX—November 27, 1938

HONESTY IN ALL THINGS

Ex. 20: 15; Luke 19: 1-10, 45, 46

15 Thou shalt not steal.

- 1 And he entered and was passing through Jericho.
- 2 And behold, a man called by name Zacchaeus; and he was a chief publican, and he was rich.
- 3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the crowd, because he was little of stature.
- 4 And he ran on before, and climbed up into a sycomore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.
- 5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house.
- 6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.
- 7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner.
- 8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold.
- 9 And Jesus said unto him, To-day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.
- 10 For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.
- 45 And he entered into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold.
- 46 Saying unto them, It is written, And my house shall be a house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of robbers.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Thou shalt not steal." (Ex. 20: 15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 111.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

November 21. M.	The Eighth Commandment (Ex. 20: 15)
November 22. T.	God, the Owner of All Things (Matt. 19: 16-22)
November 23. W.	Zacchaeus, an Honest Man (Luke 19: 1-10)
November 24. T.	The Parable of the Vineyard (Luke 20: 9-16)
November 25. F.	The Compensations of Honesty (Luke 16: 1-13)
November 26. S.	A Den of Thieves (John 2: 13-22)
November 27. S.	The Righteous Man (Psalm 34: 13-22)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For Ex. 20: 15, according to Hales, 1647 B.C.; according to Usher, 1491 B.C.; according to Calmet, 1487 B.C.; for Luke 19: 1-10, 45, 46, A.D. 30 or 31.

Places.—Mount Sinai, Jericho, and the temple in Jerusalem.

Persons.—Jehovah, the children of Israel, Jesus, Zacchaeus, and the traders in the temple.

Lesson Links.—It has been pointed out that a law with no penalty assessed for its violation is not enforceable—it is practically null and void. In announcing the ten commandments Jehovah named no penalties for their violation; they had therefore to depend on other legislation to give them force. And this, in the light of some teaching, presents a peculiar situation. Without reason or scripture it has been argued that the ten commandments are called the law of God, and that the rest of the law is called the law of Moses; also the moral law and the ceremonial law. This distinction is made to make it appear that the ten commandments are greater than the rest of the law. Yet the ten commandments, God's law, the greater law, had to depend on the lesser law for its enforcement—the greater was impotent without the lesser! And another thing, the two greatest commands, the two on which all the rest of the law, including the ten commandments, hang, are found in what they call the ceremonial law—the greater hangs on the less! (Mark 12: 28-34.) To love God with all the mind, heart, soul, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves is the sum total of all the other commands. Can any one believe that the greater is summed up in the less? Hence, the effort to make it appear that the ten commandments are more important than the rest of the law is without force—unreasonable and unscriptural. Some things are wrong in the very nature of things. It has always been wrong for one person to invade the rights of another. Every person has a right to life and the property he honestly acquires, and it is a crime against him to rob him of either. And since God has spoken, it is a crime against both the laws of nature and the laws of revelation. On the matter of honesty and the fair treatment of others, the New Testament speaks plainly and emphatically.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Eighth Commandment (Verse 15)

"Thou shalt not steal." Technically there is a difference in stealing, robbing, defrauding, and cheating, but there is little, if any, difference in the condition of the heart prompting each of these forms of dishonesty. When either form of dishonesty is being practiced, the innocent party is losing property that rightfully belongs to him. Or to take advantage of a person's necessities and sell to him for more than the article is worth, or to buy from him an article for less than it is worth, because dire necessity forces him to sell, can hardly be called honest. It is a species of robbery. This is true in a general way. However, if you pay as much for the article as it is worth to you, you may be doing him a favor. That could hardly be called fraud. The law of Moses was to be so enforced that the innocent party in a theft did not suffer the loss. "If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall pay five oxen

for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep." It did not go so hard with him, if he had not disposed of the animal. "If the theft be found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall pay double." (Ex. 22: 1, 4.) Other property which he had appropriated to his own use had to be restored with a fifth of its value added. (Lev. 6: 1-7.) To make a thief pay a fine to the state or to serve a jail sentence does not reimburse the man from whom the goods were stolen.

Zacchaeus, a Chief Publican (Luke 19: 1, 2)

Jesus was making his last journey to Jerusalem to attend his last Passover. He had come down through Perea, the route the Jews of Galilee followed in going to Jerusalem. Great crowds would be traveling the same road. At the outskirts of Jericho he gave sight to a blind man. Jericho was then a city of some importance. He had now entered and was passing through Jericho. Crowds of people were gathered about him; so dense was the crowd that traveling must have been difficult. In that throng was a man named Zacchaeus, a citizen of Jericho. "He was a chief publican, and he was rich." The Romans had a peculiar method of collecting taxes. They farmed out the taxes, that is, they sold the right to collect taxes in the various districts. The man who bought the right to collect taxes in a district would have other men under him. Perhaps this is the reason Zacchaeus was called a chief publican. The Roman method of collecting taxes made fraud tempting and possible, though the law required the publican to restore fourfold, if fraud was practiced. It would be unpleasant for any people to pay taxes to a foreign oppressor; and it was especially galling to the Jews to do so, for it was against their religious principles to do so. They would therefore abominate one of their own race who collected such taxes. Such a man was cut off from synagogue privileges—he became both a religious and social outcast. The fact that Zacchaeus was a rich man did not give him any religious or social privileges; but he knew all that when he became a publican. However, in his quieter and more thoughtful moments, he must often have longed for the society of his fellow Jews, and to enjoy again full religious privileges with them.

Zacchaeus Seeks to See Jesus (Verses 3, 4)

Giving sight to the blind man had intensified the interest of the crowds. Zacchaeus desired to see who it was that was creating so much excitement. "And he could not for the crowd." This says much in a few words as to the excitement the teaching and miracles of Jesus had created. So dense was the crowd about Jesus that Zacchaeus could not press his way through it to a point where he could see Jesus. He was a little man, and could not therefore see over the heads of the people; but he was determined and resourceful. He knew of a sycamore tree up the street along which Jesus would pass. He could outtravel that slow-moving mass of people; so he ran on ahead, and climbed up into that tree. There is no proof that he was moved by any higher motive than natural curiosity. When there is excitement, people like to see the cause of it. Zacchaeus was not caring about dignity as he ran and climbed that

tree. His fellow Jews rated him as low as they could any way. Was it curiosity, or was it real interest, that caused a rich man to do such an unconventional thing? The reader may form his own opinion. As he ran and climbed that tree he had no idea as to the great experience that was just ahead of him.

Jesus Lodges with Zacchaeus (Verses 5-7)

"And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up." Zacchaeus had not expected that. And he must have been doubly surprised when Jesus addressed him by name, and even more astonished at what Jesus said. He expected no Jew to speak to him in a friendly manner. And he must have been astonished beyond expression when Jesus said, "To-day I must abide at thy house." None of the strict Jews would so much as speak to him, save as they had to do so in his capacity as a tax collector. After being so long shunned by the strict Jews as if he were a leper, to receive the greatest of them all into his home made that a glad day for Zacchaeus. The request to "make haste" would impress Zacchaeus that Jesus was very much interested in being a guest in his home. "And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully." He would provide the best he had, and would naturally want his fellow publicans to share his joy. It was useless to invite the Pharisees to come into his house; they would not dare defile themselves by entering the home of a publican. And Jesus knew that they would criticize him for doing so, but criticism did not cause Jesus to change in the least degree his plans and purposes. "And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner." In their eyes, to be a tax collector for the Romans was to be a sinner, with whom no righteous person should associate. The publican was not allowed membership in a synagogue, nor to pray in public. He was a religious outcast; and, with the Jews, to be a religious outcast was also to be a social outcast. But Jesus often astonished them by disregarding their social standards. It is significant that Jesus passed all these by, and invited himself, so to speak, to go home with a publican, "a man that is a sinner."

"To-day Is Salvation Come to This House" (Verses 8-10)

Of course we have only a brief report of the things that were said and done on that occasion. Jesus had gone to that home because Zacchaeus was a man that he could help. Evidently Jesus did some teaching—enough to make a profound impression on him. "And Zacchaeus stood." Perhaps he arose during the meal. He had an important statement to make, and respectfully stood to make it. From the words he used in making his statement, it seems that he was stating what he was in the habit of doing. "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold." From the last part of his statement it might seem that he was stating a purpose, and not a custom; for it may be said that he would not exact too much from any man, and then immediately restore fourfold. Even so; but he might honestly collect from a man more than he should, and later find that he had done so. If so, he complied with

the Roman law in restoring fourfold. But whether he was stating a custom or a resolution, his statement shows a right spirit. If he had not been fair in his collection of taxes, he was now determined to right his wrongs. In that case he was manifesting genuine repentance. When a man repents, he will do what he can to undo the damage he has done to others. He will not continue to profit off what he has gained by stealing, extortion, or fraud. If he has wronged another by his talk, he will do what he can to set matters right. Because Zacchaeus showed a right spirit, and because he was a son of Abraham, Jesus said, "To-day is salvation come to this house." This statement proves that Zacchaeus was in earnest; for had he not been sincere in what he said, Jesus would not have made that statement. Then Jesus stated his mission, and in so doing answered his critics. "For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." In this statement the whole purpose, the very heart and soul, of Christianity is revealed. Jesus did not come to cause men to be lost, but to save the lost. They were lost without him. But the mission of Christ to the world is meaningless to the person who does not recognize himself a lost sinner. He could do nothing for those Pharisees who thought themselves better than he.

Jesus Cleanses the Temple (Verses 45, 46)

Early in his ministry Jesus had driven the traders out of the temple. (John 2: 13-16.) They had established themselves again. For the parallel passages giving accounts of this cleansing, read Matt. 21: 12-16; Mark 11: 15-18. The priests had charge of the temple, and they likely rented to these traders space in some of the porches or rooms of the temple. These traders could have carried on an honest business, but the temple was not the place for such a business. It was a house of prayer, a house for worship, and not a place for trade and traffic. But they were not conducting their business honestly. "Ye have made it a den of robbers." That is a significant statement. A den is a resort, a place of protection. These men were dealing dishonestly—robbing the people, and the temple authorities were giving them protection. And so Jesus drove them out. It does not seem that the priests had formerly been so actively opposed to Jesus as had been the Pharisees, but this incident so enraged them that they immediately "sought how they might destroy him."

SOME REFLECTIONS

It is a sort of proverb that honesty is the best policy, but he who is honest for policy's sake is not honest at heart. A Christian must deal honestly with all men, because it is right in the sight of God for him to be honest. Honesty must be his principle, not his policy.

A Christian cannot engage in a business that is not helpful to his fellow man. He cannot disregard right by engaging in a hurtful, or even doubtful, business, simply because he can make money at it. "Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need." (Eph. 4: 28.)

For another reason, a Christian cannot engage in a questionable business. In doing so he would rob the church of God of his influence. He owes it to God and to his fellow man to live so that his influence is helpful. He cannot be honest with his fellow man if his influence robs him of his good character. He can rob another of his good name by slandering him or by leading him into sin.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Why the ten commandments are not greater than other parts of the law.

Different ways in which people may steal.

How we may rob God.

Some business that Christians cannot follow.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Why is the law without a penalty of no effect?

Prove that the ten commandments are not greater than some other parts of the law.

Name some things that are wrong in the nature of things.

Verse 15

Repeat the eighth commandment.

What crimes are herein prohibited?

How did the law of Moses provide for the enforcement of this commandment?

Luke 19: 1, 2

What journey was Jesus making when the incidents of this section of our lesson occurred?

What miracle had he just performed?

What person comes into notice?

What was his business and his financial rating?

Why did the Jews hate a publican?

Verses 3, 4

Tell how Zacchaeus managed to see Jesus.

What seemed to prompt him?

Verses 5-7

What unexpected thing happened?

What did Jesus say?

Why would that both astonish and please Zacchaeus?

What did the other Jews say?

Why did they oppose such practice?

Verses 8-10

What did Zacchaeus say in his home?

Discuss his possible meaning.

What does repentance lead one to do?

What did Jesus say to Zacchaeus?

How did he state his mission?

Discuss his statement.

Verses 45, 46

Describe the conditions Jesus found in the temple.

What was wrong about their business?

What did he do about it?

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson X—December 4, 1938

THE SIN OF LYING

Ex. 20: 16; Matt. 15: 19, 20; John 8: 42-47; Eph. 4: 25

16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

19 For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings:

20 These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not the man.

42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me.

43 Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word.

44 Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof.

45 But because I say the truth, ye believe me not.

46 Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe me?

47 He that is of God heareth the words of God: for this cause ye hear them not, because ye are not of God.

25 Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor: for we are members one of another.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Behold, thou desireth truth in the inward parts.” (Psalm 51: 6.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Prov. 22: 22-28.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

November 28.	M.	The Ninth Commandment (Ex. 20: 16)
November 29.	T.	Gehazi's Sin (2 Kings 5: 20-27)
November 30.	W.	God Hates Falsehood (Prov. 6: 16-19)
December 1.	T.	The Sin of Lying (Acts 5: 1-11)
December 2.	F.	Truth-telling (1 Sam. 3: 10-18)
December 3.	S.	The True Children of God (John 8: 42-47)
December 4.	S.	The Blessings of Truthfulness (Psalm 24: 1-6)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For Ex. 20: 16, see preceding lesson; for Matt. 15: 19, 20, probably A.D. 30; for John 8: 42-47, A.D. 29 or 30; for Eph. 4: 25, about A.D. 61.

Places.—Mount Sinai, Capernaum, Jerusalem, and Rome.

Persons.—Jehovah, the children of Israel, Jesus, his disciples, the Jews in Jerusalem, Paul, and the Ephesian Christians.

Lesson Links.—It has always been wrong to bear false witness against another. It has always been wrong to tell lies. A lie is defined to be a falsehood uttered or acted to deceive. It is a vicious lie when it is told to pervert justice or to damage some one. To lie for your own profit and to the hurt of some one else is base, and so it is to lie to pervert justice. Lie not—few liars reform. Some reasons have been given in previous lessons to show that the ten commandments are not a perfect code of morals. A careful study of the extent and limits of the ninth commandment will give further evidence to the same effect. It prohibited their bearing false witness against their neighbor, but said nothing about their enemies. Nor did it prohibit giving false testimony in favor of a neighbor. It did not prohibit lying in a trade. You must look in other parts of the law to find such falsehoods condemned.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Ninth Commandment (Verse 16)

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.” This seems to refer to giving false testimony against another Hebrew when he is on trial. It prohibits giving false testimony in an effort to condemn the party on trial. The commandment does not prohibit giving false testimony to clear the guilty—that would not be bearing false witness against him. Other precepts of the law condemn all

false testimony. "Ye shall not swear by my name falsely, and profane the name of thy God: I am Jehovah." (Lev. 19: 12.) In giving their testimony they were not to be swayed by the multitude; neither were they to give false testimony in order to favor a poor man, nor to oppress him. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to turn aside after a multitude to wrest justice: neither shalt thou favor a poor man in his cause." "Thou shalt not wrest the justice due to thy poor in his cause." (Ex. 23: 2, 3, 6.) If a man testified falsely against another, the judges were to make diligent inquiry into the matter: "and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and have testified falsely against his brother; then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to do unto his brother: so shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee." (Deut. 19: 15-21.) Could a more effective penalty be assessed against a false witness? Another form of falsehood was prohibited, a kind of falsehood that is too common even today. "Thou shalt not take up a false report." (Ex. 23: 1.) And there was such a thing as lying under the pretense of prophesying. (Deut. 18: 20-22.) A nation is in a bad way when people cease to have any regard for the truth. Notice the corruption of the Jews in Jeremiah's day: "A wonderful and horrible thing is come to pass in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jer. 5: 30.) When such conditions prevail, the law is not enforced. One of the characters which Jehovah hates is "a false witness that uttereth lies." (Prov. 6: 16-19.)

Moral Evils Come from the Heart (Matt. 15: 19, 20)

The Pharisees and the scribes said to Jesus, "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread." The Pharisees and the scribes were sticklers for the forms and ceremonies of the law, and especially for the traditions of the elders. It seems that they paid no attention to the condition of the heart. On another occasion Jesus said to them, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full from extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the platter, that the outside thereof may become clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." (Matt. 23: 25-28.) If the inside, the heart, is made clean, the outside will become clean. If the heart is corrupt, the outward life cannot remain clean. "For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not the man." (Matt. 15: 19, 20.) The flesh has its appetites and passions, but the purposes and plans to gratify the flesh are formed in the heart. The deed, whether good or bad, comes from the heart. Back of every evil deed is an evil purpose. Before the mouth speaks a lie, the heart has already formed it—the lie is in the heart before it is on the tongue.

"But the things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart; and they defile the man." (Verse 18.) "Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things: and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." (Matt. 12: 34, 35.)

Why the Jews Would Not Hear Jesus (John 8: 42, 43)

One of the strangest things of all is the attitude of the Jews toward Jesus. They had been in training under the law for his coming, and the prophets had foretold his coming; also, they were expecting him to come about that time. Yet when he came they rejected him, persecuted him, and finally put him to death. And yet, when we consider the state of their mind, it is not so strange that they rejected him. They had expected a world king and a world kingdom, a king and a kingdom that would crush all other kingdoms—a strictly worldly king and kingdom. Such expectation had developed in them a spirit utterly antagonistic to the spirit of Christ. And so they hated the meek and lowly Nazarene, and would have none of his teaching. Yet they claimed to love God and to be very much devoted to his law; but their worldly ambitions and their great desire to destroy their enemies had rotted their character. "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me." If God were their Father they could not have hated any one, and most especially could they not have hated Jesus. "For I came forth and am come from God." He had demonstrated by his many signs that he was from God; and they would have seen that he was, had they not been so blind by their own sins and notions. Early in the ministry of Jesus Nicodemus said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." (John 3: 1, 2.) Had the other Jews been as fair-minded as Nicodemus, they would all have known the same thing. Jesus was not a self-appointed teacher; God had sent him, and proved it by the signs which he did through Jesus. Only their perversity kept them from recognizing him as a teacher sent of God and from giving willing heed to what he said. And because of their perversity, they could not understand Jesus nor his speech. They, of course, could hear his voice, but could not hear with understanding. Their minds were too full of their own notions to entertain any teaching that did not fit into their scheme of things.

"Ye Are of Your Father the Devil" (Verses 44, 45)

In the Bible such strong language is usually applied only to those who are wholly perverse—those too perverse to hear what God says. These men were wholly under the influence of the devil, and it was their will to follow the devil—"the lusts of your father it is your will to do." Of such characters Peter said, "Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin." (2 Pet. 2: 14.) Their father, the devil, was a murderer from the beginning. He killed the whole human family in inducing Adam and Eve to do that which brought death upon all. It is strange that people will be so set in their determination to serve him who murdered the whole human

family and who also seeks the eternal ruin of all men. Not only is he a murderer of the body and the souls of men, but "there is no truth in him." He is wholly against the truth—truth about anything finds no lodgement in him. He does not circulate lies that others originate—he is the father of all lies. He originates them—all lies are of the devil. He will have nothing to do with the truth, except to oppose it. And because these Jews were children of the devil, they would not believe Jesus as he spoke to them the truth. The more any man is under the influence of the devil, the more averse he is to the truth of God. Because Elymas the sorcerer sought "to turn aside the proconsul from the faith," Paul said to him, "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?" (Acts 13: 8-10.) It seems that a man is perverse beyond redemption when he will not believe the truth, and fights it with all his might. A man is in a deplorable condition when he does not love the truth. (2 Thess. 2: 8-12.) But the man who has no truth in himself does not love the truth of God; the man who has no regard for his own word will have no regard for the word of God.

Those Who Heed God's Words (Verses 46, 47)

Jesus had lived and taught openly among the Jews. They had hounded his every step, and tried to find some fault in him. Their shrewdest men had watched him with all diligence. Not another person ever lived on earth whose words and actions were so closely watched. Yet Jesus could boldly stand before these bitter enemies and challenge them to find some fault in him. "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" And they could not name a wrong thing that he had done, and yet they hated him with consuming hatred. "They hated me without a cause." (John 15: 25.) Hating him as they did, though they could not convict him of sin, they would not believe the truth he taught them. They were in covenant relation with God, yet they were not of God, for they would not hear the words of God. "He that is of God heareth the words of God." People may be of God in a prospective sense, because they are of a condition of heart that will hear the word of God when it is preached to them.

"Speak Ye Truth Each One with His Neighbor" (Eph. 4: 25)

It seems that it should not have been necessary for Paul to exhort Christians to put away falsehood; but evidently the brethren to whom he was writing had need of the exhortation. It was needful also to exhort the Colossians, "Lie not one to another." (Col. 3: 9.) Speech is a highly prized gift of God, and it should not be used in the base habit of lying. "Neighbor," in verse twenty-five, refers to a fellow member of the church, for Paul immediately adds the qualifying clause, "For we are members one of another." Christians certainly ought not to lie to one another. There can be no good fellowship in a church when the members cannot have confidence in the truthfulness of one another. But it is a sad fact that some church members not only lie to each other, but lie on each other. That is especially true when factions arise, for the party spirit makes liars. "But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not

and lie not against the truth. . . . For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed." (James 3: 14-16.) There is one form of lying that is common, and yet little noticed. People surmise evil and then tell it. To surmise is to imagine or infer on scanty, or even no, evidence. Surmising is guessing; evil surmising is guessing that the other person is guilty of evil, and that is condemned. (1 Tim. 6: 4.) Evil surmisings are here classed with envy, strife, railings, and wranglings. Such things are practiced by "men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth."

SOME REFLECTIONS

Christianity is the only system of religion or philosophy that sets forth a perfect code of morals. There is not a virtue that it does not cultivate, and it presents sufficient motives to stir people to attain its ideals. It also gives people a keen sense of personal responsibility to God.

The rewards for truthfulness and the wages for lying should banish all lying from our lips. "The wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 6: 23.) "Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie." (Rev. 22: 15.) Here the liar is in a class with the lowest and most vicious of human beings.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The Old Testament teaching on lying.
The evils of lying prophets.
The evils of slander.
Evil surmising.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
Why are some things naturally wrong?
What is a lie?
Is it ever right to deceive?
Wherein does the ninth commandment fail to prohibit all lying?

Verse 16

What is the meaning and scope of the ninth commandment?
What false testimony does it not prohibit?
What is said elsewhere about swearing falsely?
Give the substance of Ex. 23: 2, 3, 6.
If a man testified falsely against another, what was done to him?
Name another common form of falsehood.
What horrible thing had happened in Jeremiah's day?

Matt. 15: 19, 20

What criticism had the Pharisees made concerning the disciples?
Discuss Matt. 23: 25-28.
Whence do evil deeds come?
Give what Jesus said on this point.

John 8: 42, 43

Why did the Jews hate and persecute Jesus?
If God had been their Father, why would they have loved Jesus?
Why should they have known that Jesus was sent of God?

Verses 44, 45

To whom is such strong language applied?
What did Jesus say of the devil?
How was the devil a murderer?
What is meant by his being the father of a lie?
Give the words of Paul to Elymas.

What should be one's attitude toward the truth?

Verses 46, 47

What bold challenge did Jesus make? What had been the efforts of the Pharisees?

Eph. 4: 25

Give Paul's exhortation in Eph. 4: 25. What is certain to develop lying in a congregation? Discuss evil surmising. Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XI—December 11, 1938

THE SIN OF COVETOUSNESS

Ex. 20: 17; Luke 12: 13-21; 1 Tim. 6: 6-10

17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

13 And one out of the multitude said unto him, Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me.

14 But he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17 And he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my grain and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry.

20 But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?

21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain:

7 For we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out;

8 But having food and covering we shall be therewith content.

9 But they that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition.

10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Thou shalt not covet." (Ex. 20: 17.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Prov. 22: 22-28.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

December 5.	M.	The Tenth Commandment (Ex. 20: 17)
December 6.	T.	The Sin of Covetousness (Luke 12: 13-21)
December 7.	W.	A Root of All Evil (1 Tim. 6: 6-10)
December 8.	T.	Greedy for Position (Matt. 20: 20-28)
December 9.	F.	Judas Sells His Friend (Matt. 26: 14, 15)
December 10.	S.	Ahab's Covetousness (1 Kings 21: 1-20)
December 11.	S.	Warning Against Greed (Prov. 28: 16-25)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For Ex. 20: 17, see lesson eight; for Luke 12: 13-21, A.D. 30 or 31; for 1 Tim. 6: 6-10, probably A.D. 63.

Places.—Mount Sinai and Judea. The point from which Paul sent his First Epistle to Timothy is not definitely known.

Persons.—Jehovah, the children of Israel, Jesus, the multitude, Paul, and Timothy.

Lesson Links.—Coveting may be defined as inordinate desire. Merely to earnestly desire that which is right to possess, and which we have no desire to obtain except in an honest way, is not coveting; but when the desire for a thing is so strong that we are willing to obtain it in an unlawful or dishonest way we are guilty of coveting. The covetous person is dishonest. There is danger in cultivating a desire; the desire might become the master. There is need therefore that the desires be held in check. Besides tending to make for dishonesty, the craving for other things keeps us from enjoying what we have. The tenth commandment is a part of the law from which the Jews were made free. (Read carefully Rom. 7: 1-8.) Paul was not teaching a lesson on marriage and divorce, but was using the well-known marriage law as an illustration of their relation to the law. The Jews were joined—married—to the law, and could not be joined, or married, to any other system of religion so long as the law was in force. To do so would be spiritual adultery, of which the Jews had been frequently guilty in their lapses into idolatry, as may be seen by reading such passages as Jer. 3: 6-9; Ezek. 23. Hence, they could not be joined, or married, to Christ till the law ended. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ; that ye should be joined to another, even to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God." (Rom. 7: 4.) But what law? Verse seven: "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." This shows that the law from which they had been delivered included the ten commandments. But why worry if the ten commandments were abolished with the rest of the law? The New Testament gives a perfect code of morals, the ten commandments did not.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Tenth Commandment (Verse 17)

"Thou shalt not covet . . . anything that is thy neighbor's." This is a very comprehensive commandment, and yet it had its limitations. The neighbor was evidently another Hebrew. It did not prohibit their coveting what belonged to their enemies; for later, under Jehovah's directions, they drove out the wicked nations of Canaan and took possession of their houses, lands, and stock. They also took possession of much land and other property on the east side of the Jordan. The tenth commandment, like most of the other commandments, was prohibitive. For the most part they prohibited evil deeds, but, excepting the fifth commandment, they required no good deeds. If the Hebrew saw his neighbor's house on fire, and did nothing about it; if he saw his neighbor's ox or his ass fallen into a pit or straying from home, and neither recovered them nor notified their owner, he did not violate the tenth commandment. What he must do in such cases is found in what some call the ceremonial law. The command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Lev. 19: 18), required the Hebrew to look after the interests and welfare of his neighbor, and covered all the ground covered by the sixth to the tenth commandment, and much more. The tenth commandment told

the Hebrew what not to do about his neighbor's possessions; other parts of the law told him what to do where there was need, even when the owner was a personal enemy. "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, thou shalt forbear to leave him, thou shalt surely release it with him." (Ex. 23: 4, 5.) The Hebrew was required to see that no other Hebrew suffered any loss through his neglect. "Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely bring them again unto thy brother. And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it home to thy house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him." (Deut. 22: 1-4.) The ten commandments prohibited bad deeds; what some call the ceremonial law, in addition to its prohibitions, required good deeds.

Jesus Refuses a Request (Luke 12: 13-15)

Jesus did not often refuse a request. When the maimed, the blind, the sick, came to him with a plea for help, he heard their plea and healed them; but the present case was different. The man may have had a just complaint. The father had died and there was an inheritance. The oldest son was allowed a double portion, and it is likely, that, in this case, the older brother had taken possession of all the property. The complaining brother had been robbed of his share. He must have thought that the words of Jesus had great weight; he certainly knew that Jesus was not an officer of the law. It seems that he would have taken his case before the proper authorities for adjustment, but he came to Jesus. Jesus would not get mixed up in such matters. He had not been made a judge to settle legal disputes. But the incident furnished Jesus an opportunity to teach a needed lesson. "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness." This shows that a man must watch himself, lest covetousness creep into his thinking. The brother against whom the complaint was made furnished a striking example of covetousness, for a man is far gone in covetousness when he will rob his own brother. But there are many sad examples of family rows over an inheritance, all growing out of covetousness. Love in a family is too sweet and delightful to be destroyed by anything so sorbid as a few dollars. People who do such things may continue for a time to exist, but they do not really live. What is life when love, where it should bloom and fruit most luxuriantly, withers and dies? Life does not consist in the abundance of the things we possess.

The Musings of a Rich Man (Verses 16-19)

If people would get over the idea that a parable is a piece of fiction, it would clear thinking on parables. When Jesus said, "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully," he was stating what had actually occurred. He could have named the man. He was using that man to show the folly of seeking riches and depending on them for enjoyment and security. This man had rich

land; it produced more than he had room to store. For once his riches had become a problem, a burden. He mused in his own heart; he took counsel with himself, and, like many another fool, left God out of consideration. He decided to tear down his old barns and build greater ones. He would store all his grains and goods, and then say to himself, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry." He felt secure in his wealth. There is much talk these days about social security, economic security, etc. It all grows out of the idea that money, or wealth, gives security. This rich man felt proud of his security. He could now take his ease, and enjoy the good things of life; so he thought. But there is no real security in material things.

God Answers the Rich Man's Musings (Verses 20, 21)

It is never safe to make wealth the god in whom you trust, and a man does not have to be rich to do that. Even a poor man may long for the day to come when he will be able to do as this rich man did. When a man becomes so full of greed as was this rich man, he is of no practical benefit to the world. He is a sort of a make-believe man around which property has accumulated. When he is dead the world has lost nothing, for his property remains in the world. To all such God sooner or later will say, "Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?" This calls to mind Solomon's language: "And I hated all my labor wherein I labored under the sun, seeing that I must leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he will be a wise man or a fool? yet will he have rule over all my labor wherein I have labored, and wherein I have showed myself wise under the sun." (Eccles. 2: 18, 19.) And it so happened that the man who had rule over all that Solomon had built was a fool. Any man is a fool who trusts in riches instead of in God. Solomon himself had trusted too much in worldly glory and material prosperity. Toward the close of his life he found that he too had been foolish. "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

"Godliness with Contentment Is Great Gain" (1 Tim. 6: 6-8)

There are a few things that people really need; they need food and covering. Man's actual needs are few. Most of the things we think we need are more or less luxuries. It is true that the more complex life becomes the greater become the demands on the people. But there is great danger that in our struggles to keep up with the world we miss the main source of happiness. Paul had learned to be content no matter what experience he had to pass through. (Phil. 4: 11, 12.) He was not content in the sense that he was shiftless and lazy—no man ever worked harder than he; but he was contented in God's service, even if it brought hardships upon him. That contentment was not disturbed by a craving after worldly prosperity. "Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee." (Heb. 13: 5.) To give all our thoughts and energy to the gaining of wealth is as foolish as it is

useless; for we will not be able to take any of it with us when we leave this world. And it might be a bone of contention among our children when we are gone. If we have enough to supply our own needs and to help others who need, why accumulate wealth till it becomes a burden? Wealth is useful only when it is used.

The Danger of Riches (Verses 9, 10)

Wealth gives a man power, and so many people use power to the hurt of others. Hence, James asks, "Do not the rich oppress you, and themselves drag you before the judgment-seats?" (James 2: 6.) Not all rich men are oppressive, but some are; and all are tempted at times to use the power of their wealth for unholy purposes. It takes a strong character to stand the weight of wealth. Jesus mentioned the deceitfulness of riches as one of the things that choke out the word. (Matt. 13: 22.) The rich person may come to trust in his riches instead of God. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10: 23.) Riches may also make a person arrogant and high-minded. For that reason Paul gave this charge to Timothy: "Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." (1 Tim. 6: 17.) This shows that some of the Christians in Paul's day were rich. Wealth within itself is not a sin; the right or wrong of it depends on what is done with it, and what it does for the character of the one who possesses it. Even the poor man may fall a victim to the allurements of riches. If his craving for riches is greater than his desire for honesty and uprightness, he will use unfair, unjust, and dishonest methods to gain money. "But they that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition." The love of money is not the root of all sinful deeds, but it does produce all sorts of sinful deeds. Many of the most horrible crimes grow out of the love of money. And many a man in his greed for money has brought sorrow to himself and to those who love him.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Men trust in riches; they make wealth their god; and this makes them idolaters. Paul tells us that covetousness is idolatry. (Col. 3: 5.)

Paul speaks of the deceitfulness of riches. They promise more than they give. They promise security, ease, and contentment; more often they are a burden and a worry.

Many a man imagines that his wealth makes him important. If he is not important without wealth, he is not important with it. But such an idea spoils a man; it makes him a snob, and therefore less important than he otherwise would be. It is not what a man has, but what he is, that makes him important. Jesus was the most important person that ever walked among men, and next to him was Paul; and neither of them had any property.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Money—its uses and abuses.

How the love of money leads to sin.

How to make money a blessing to its possessor and to others.

How wealth deceived the church at Laodicea. (Rev. 3: 14-22.)

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.

What is covetousness?

What should we do about our desires?

Give evidence that the ten commandments ended with the rest of the law.

Verse 17

Repeat the tenth commandment.

What did this commandment not prohibit?

What was the extent of its requirements?

What was the nature of most of the ten commandments?

What did other parts of the law require as to strayed stock or lost things?

Luke 12: 13-15

How did Jesus usually treat requests?

What request did he refuse, and why?

What exhortation did Jesus give?

How do inheritances sometimes work ruin?

Is it worth such ruin?

Why do families sometimes fuss over an inheritance?

Verses 16-19

What is a parable?

State the parable of the rich fool.

Discuss his musings.

Why do not material things give security?

Verses 20, 21

Who make riches their god?

Why was this rich man worth practically nothing to the world?

What did God say to him?

What did Solomon conclude concerning the fruits of his labor?

1 Tim. 6: 6-8

Let the class discuss the property they think people really need.

What had Paul learned about such matters?

Discuss Heb. 13: 5.

Verses 9, 10

Name some of the dangers of riches.

What did Jesus say about a rich man and the kingdom of heaven?

Discuss 1 Tim. 6: 17.

How may riches spoil a poor man?

Discuss verse 9, also verse 10.

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XII—December 18, 1938

CHRIST'S NEW COMMANDMENT

Matt. 5: 43-48; 22: 34-40; John 13: 34, 35; 15: 12-14

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

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

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

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

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

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

34 But the Pharisees, when they heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, gathered themselves together.

35 And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, trying him:

36 Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?

37 And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the great and first commandment.

39 And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.
 40 On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets.

34 A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

12 This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14 Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” (John 13: 34.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 5: 1-8.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

December 12.	M.	Christ's New Commandment (John 13: 34, 35)
December 13.	T.	The Supreme Commandment (Matt. 22: 34-40)
December 14.	W.	Love to Enemies (Matt. 5: 43-48)
December 15.	T.	Jesus Teaches Neighborliness (Luke 10: 25-37)
December 16.	F.	A Brotherly Spirit (Acts 8: 26-39)
December 17.	S.	The Golden Rule (Luke 6: 27-38)
December 18.	S.	Love, the Way of God (1 John 3: 18-24)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For Matt. 5: 43-48, probably A.D. 28; the other sections of the lesson were spoken during the week in which Jesus was crucified. The last selections from John were spoken the night in which Jesus was betrayed.

Places.—A mountain in Galilee and Jerusalem.

Persons.—Jesus, his disciples, the multitudes, and the Pharisees.

Lesson Links.—In studying the ten commandments during this quarter, we found that they were delivered to the Hebrews, and to no other nation, and that they were a part of the system of laws that ended at the cross. That the authority of Christ superseded that of Moses should not have been difficult for even the early Jewish Christians to accept, for Moses had so taught them. Moses said, “Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; according to all that thou desiredst of Jehovah thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of Jehovah my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And Jehovah said unto me, They have well said that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.” (Deut. 18: 15-19.) There is a world of meaning in the expression, “unto him ye shall hearken.” On the mount of transfiguration, as Moses and Elijah disappeared, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son: hear ye him.” Jesus said, “For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me.” (John 5: 46.) If we believe

Moses and Christ himself, we will believe that the authority of Christ superseded that of Moses.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

"Love Your Enemies" (Verses 43-48)

In the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor," neighbor referred to any Hebrew; the other peoples were considered strangers or enemies. The law nowhere said in so many words, "Thou shalt hate thine enemy." It required them to drive the nations before them out of Canaan, and to take possession of their property. It prohibited their contracting marriages with people of other nations, and it prohibited their taking part in any of their religious ceremonies. But Jesus introduced a new element. "But I say unto you, Love your enemies." That was a new doctrine. Jesus did not mean for us to have the same feelings for our enemies that we have for our friends, or that husbands and wives have for each other. The word here used is not the word that expresses affections that grow up between people by association, but rather the love that reason and duty dictate. In the very nature of the case we cannot have the same feelings for an enemy that we have for a dear friend, or that a husband and a wife have for each other, or that exists between parents and children; but we can practice the love Jesus requires us to have for our enemies. It is practical, rather than sentimental. One way to love your enemies is to pray for them—"pray for them that persecute you." In Luke 6: 27 we have a further expression of what it is to love our enemies: "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you." If a man helps his enemy when he is in need, if he does for him all the good that he can, if he prays for him, what more can he do in the way of loving him? All these things we must do that we may be children of God. He gives the blessings of nature to the just and the unjust. If you love those who love you, you are merely exchanging love for love. There is no reward—it is a mere swapping of love. You get in return what you give. The publicans, a class despised by all men, loved those who loved them. To extend the common courtesies only to our friends and brethren is no more than the people of heathen nations do. If a Christian's deeds are no better than what prevails among the common run of men, he cannot be considered better than the rest of men. He must be better, or his profession is a mere pretense. We are not required to be as perfect as God; but as he is perfect, we are to strive to be perfect also. He could not set before us anything less than perfection, as an ideal toward which to strive. Striving for that ideal makes us better; at the same time, the realization that we fall short of our ideal keeps us humble. We cannot boast that we have reached our standard, and that nothing remains for us to accomplish.

A Lawyer's Question (Matt. 22: 34-36)

The two leading sects of the Jews were the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees were sticklers for the tradition of the elders; the Sadducees were not; but it seems that their main differences are expressed in Acts 23: 8: "For the Sadducees say that there is no

resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both." The Sadducees were materialists. They had one argument that they perhaps had often used on the Pharisees, and which it is not likely that the Pharisees were ever able to meet in a satisfactory way. They presented it to Jesus, but he showed them that their argument was based on ignorance. (Matt. 22: 23-33.) In a way, his so easily disposing of the argument of the Sadducees was a reflection on the Pharisees. Jesus had done successfully and easily what the learned doctors of the law could not do. They gathered themselves together, and held a conference. They were in a better frame of mind toward Jesus. He had helped them out, even if his doing so did discredit them. They decided to test his knowledge of the law. Evidently the lawyer was the shrewdest man available. A lawyer was not an attorney, as with us, but a man skilled in the law of Moses. They hoped to discredit Jesus by showing that he was not familiar with the law. It was natural for them to think that it was not possible for Jesus to be thoroughly familiar with the law; for they knew that he was from Galilee, and had never been under the instruction of any of their great teachers. He had said that the Sadducees erred because they did not know the scriptures; they would see how little he knew. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"

The Two Greatest Commandments of the Law (Verses 37-40)

It is likely that the lawyer expected Jesus to select one of the ten commandments; but Jesus did not do so. He selected a commandment from what might be considered an obscure part of the law—Deut. 6: 5. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." This means that their whole being was to be devoted to him. "This is the great and first commandment." It was not the first in point of time, but the first in importance. "And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Mark's report has these additional words: "There is none other commandment greater than these." These commandments were not greater because they were more binding on the people, but because they were more comprehensive. All the other commandments are summed up in these two. If a man loves God with all his heart, soul, and mind, he will devote himself wholly to the doing of all that God commands. On the night of his betrayal, Jesus said, "If a man love me, he will keep my word." (John 14: 23.) Hence, to love God supremely, and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves, is to fulfill every duty and obligation to both. "On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets." This expression is borrowed, so to speak, from their custom of hanging the scroll, or book, of the law, on a hook on the wall. These two commandments are the hook on which the whole law is suspended. It is a curious fact that both commandments are found in what some choose to call the ceremonial law, which, they say, was done away. It does not seem reasonable that the ten commandments remain in force after that on which they were suspended was done away.

A New Commandment (John 13: 34, 35)

In studying this new commandment, we must not conclude that it was the only new commandment Jesus gave; for there are others. Two of these new commandments are easy to identify and to remember, namely baptism and the Lord's Supper. The command to love one another was not new; that command was the second of the greatest commands of the law. (Lev. 19: 18.) The new commandment concerning love is that the disciples love one another, as Jesus loved them. The old commandment required them to love their neighbors as themselves; the new commandment goes beyond that. This command would not seem so difficult if we did not think of it as the love that is developed by association. It is not the same. It is not the love that exists between two people that are strongly attached to each other. It is not the love that we have in mind when we say that two people "fall in love." It is more practical than sentimental. It is giving ourselves in service for the good of others. To love the brethren as we should requires us at times to go against our feelings. We must seek to do our brother all the good we can. "But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?" (1 John 3: 17.) Love is right behavior in all our relations with our brethren in the Lord. The love Jesus requires looks to the ultimate good of a brother rather than to his present pleasure. It requires us to teach our brother when we can, rebuke him when rebuke is needed, feed him when he is hungry, clothe him when he is naked, help him in his sickness, and rejoice with him when good fortune comes his way.

The New Commandment Repeated (John 15: 12-14)

"This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you." This was spoken the night in which Jesus was betrayed. Jesus loved them so much that he died for them, but they could not know at that time that he would do so. At least, he had not then died for them; but he had done much for them. He had denied himself ease and comfort that he might teach and train them for his service. But after Jesus died for his disciples, we must understand that the commandment is still binding, just as it reads. If necessary, we must do as Jesus did—die for the disciples. On this point inspiration does not leave us in doubt. "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (1 John 3: 16.) That would be a strong demonstration of love, and it is not likely that many were ever called on to make the demonstration. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Many a man has voluntarily put himself in perilous places to save others, and not infrequently a man has lost his life in so doing. It is one way for a man to lay down his life for a friend. Jesus laid down his life for his friends—he went even beyond that. "For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. But God commandeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for

us." Christ died for his enemies. (Rom. 5: 6-10.) He died even for those who clamored for his death, and for those who nailed him to the cross. The new commandment does not require that we do the same. It merely demands that we lay down our lives for the brethren, if the need arises.

Friends of Christ.—"Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you." A person is either a friend of Christ or an enemy. "He that is not with me is against me." (Matt. 12: 30.) If we obey Christ, we are his friends; if we are not his friends, if we do not obey him, we are against him.

SOME REFLECTIONS

The Greek language has two words for the verb "love," namely, "agapao" and "phileo." The two words enabled them to express shades of meaning that our one word love does not express. To speculate as to which is the stronger verb is to miss the significance of the two verbs. Phileo is the more intimate and natural, growing out of association or blood relationships. There may be reason in it or there may not be, for it may be an infatuation. It is never used to express love for God, or God's love for us. Agapao depends on reason or a sense of duty. It is the word used to express our love to God or God's love to us, or our love for the brethren or for people in general.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Moses and Christ.
The authority of Christ.
The love Christ had for us.
What love leads one to do.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings
Give time, places, and persons.
The ten commandments were a part of what?
Show that the authority of Christ superseded that of Moses.

Verses 43-48
Who was meant by neighbor?
What did the law require of the Hebrews toward other nations?
What did Jesus command?
How can we love our enemies?
What reason does Jesus give?
What did Jesus say about our being perfect?

Matt. 22: 34-36
Who were the leading sects of the Jews?

What were their differences?
How did the Pharisees decide to test Jesus?
What question did the lawyer ask Jesus?

Verses 37-40
Give the answer Jesus made.
In what sense were these commands the greatest?
What did Jesus say of the law and these commands?

John 13: 34, 35
What was new about the command Jesus gave?
How can we fulfill it?

John 15: 12-14
How much did Jesus love them?
Repeat 1 John 3: 16.
Read and discuss Rom. 5: 6-10.
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XIII—December 25, 1938

GOD'S GREAT LOVE

Matt. 2: 1-12

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3: 16.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 8: 35-39.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

December 19.	M.	The Birth of Christ (Matt. 2: 1-12)
December 20.	T.	God's Gift to All (John 3: 16-24)
December 21.	W.	Manifesting Our Love (John 14: 15-21)
December 22.	T.	Honoring God by Our Gifts (Mark 12: 41-44)
December 23.	F.	Sharing God's Gift (Matt. 28: 18-20)
December 24.	S.	God's Love for Us (1 John 4: 7-16)
December 25.	S.	The Reign of the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9: 6, 7)

THE LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—"The precise date of the birth of Jesus the Christ is still disputable. The common reckoning or Vulgar Era as devised by Abbot Dionysius Exiguus (he died about A.D. 556) was based upon the notion that Jesus was born on December 25, one week before the January 1 of the Julian year which we call A.D. 1, thus really upon December 25 of the year 1 B.C. But no chronologist now contends that December 25 was the natal day; the only attempt is to fix the year. As Herod died in March or April of the year 4 B.C., and Matthew puts the birth of Jesus before Herod's death, the birth would fall in the still earlier part of the year 4 B.C., or in a previous year. Suffice it to say that the very learned work, *L'Art de Verifier les Dates*, puts the birth in the year 7 B.C., to make Jesus two years

old at the Christmas before the death of Herod, and other chronologists have adopted the years 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 B.C., and even A.D. 1, 2, or 3, giving a range of ten years."—*From the Chronological Table in the Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia and Scriptural Dictionary.*

Places.—Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

Persons.—The child Jesus, his mother Mary, the Magi, King Herod, and the chief priests and scribes.

Lesson Links.—God did not want people to celebrate the birth of Christ. Had he wished them to do so, he would have left no doubt as to the date of his birth. No person of information now contends that he was born on December 25. Joseph and Mary lived at Nazareth in Galilee. (Luke 1: 26, 27.) And yet Jesus was born at Bethlehem in Judea. Circumstances made it very natural for them to be in Bethlehem, instead of Nazareth, when Jesus was born. "Now it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be enrolled. . . . And all went to enrol themselves, every one to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David; to enrol himself with Mary, who was betrothed to him, being great with child. And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." (Luke 2: 1-7.) It is a singular thing that the birth of Jesus was first announced to shepherds as they watched their flocks, and that by an angel. Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day, according to the law. (Luke 2: 21.) Then thirty-three days later, "when the days of their purification according to the law of Moses, were fulfilled, they brought him up to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord." (Luke 2: 22; Lev. 12.) It seems that this visit to Jerusalem must have been before the visit of the wise men from the east; for it appears that Joseph and Mary started with the child into Egypt immediately after the visit of the wise men.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Quest of the Magi (Verses 1, 2)

Bethlehem is one of the old cities of Palestine. (Gen. 35: 19.) It was here that Ruth became the wife of Boaz, and here David was born. Here also Jesus was born. "Wise-men" of our text is a translation of the word Magi; the singular number of the word is Magus, and is found in Acts 13: 6, 8, and is there translated sorcerer. The Magi were a class of learned men of the countries of the Euphrates and the Tigris Rivers; they claimed to possess certain powers not possessed by other men. We are not told how God revealed to the Magi of our lesson the significance of the star which they saw while they were yet in their own country. The appearance of an unusual star would excite their interest, but would not of itself reveal to them that a king of the Jews had been born. Nor are we told why these men from the east would have any special interest in the fact that a king had been born in Judea. Unless God revealed to them the

kind of a kingdom this new king would have, a new king for the Jews would be of no special interest to them. God must have made revelations to them. However, all we can know for certain is that these men were called Magi, and that they had come from the east, being guided by an unusual star, and that they knew that a king of the Jews had been born. The Herod of our lesson is the one whom Josephus called Herod the Great. He was a forceful character, but as cruel as a man could be. He was a bloody tyrant, putting to death any of whom he became suspicious, including his own wife and sons. He was king of Judea by the appointment of the Roman Emperor. Years before this all of that country had been brought under subjection to Rome. Herod died soon after the events of our lesson. But as he was king of Judea, it was natural for the Magi to suppose that the new king would be born to the royal family; hence, they expected to find the newborn king in Jerusalem. In this, however, they followed their own notions, instead of the star; for it is certain that the star did not lead them to the house of Herod. It is hard for people to keep from allowing their own reasoning to cause them to deviate from divine guidance. In Jerusalem they inquired, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him." From the marginal reading we learn that the word translated worship denotes an act of reverence, whether paid to a creature or to the Creator.

The Report Stirs Jerusalem (Verse 3)

It is not to be supposed that everything that was said and done when the wise men visited Jerusalem was recorded. Every intelligent Jew in Jerusalem would want to know all possible facts about the star, and how came the wise men to know that a new king had been born. It was evident to all thoughtful people that God's hand was in the matter. And yet the report troubled Herod and all Jerusalem. This shows the importance that Herod attached to the report of the Magi; for had he thought that these Magi were wild dreamers giving way to fanciful imaginings, he would not have given the matter any thought. Herod at this time was an old man. He would not fear that a newborn babe would interfere with his reign, but he feared that royalty would pass to another family. The friends of Herod would fear lest a new king set them aside, or destroy them as new kings often did. Those who cared nothing about Herod would be afraid Herod would involve the country in war in an effort to destroy the new king.

Herod Seeks More Information (Verses 4-8)

The report of the Magi had led Herod to believe that the Messiah whom the Jews had expected had now been born. The language of Matthew leaves no room to doubt what he thought. "And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ should be born." Had he been making that inquiry for a righteous purpose, it would have been well. Before accepting the newborn babe as the promised Messiah, people would need to know that he came as the prophets had foretold. Herod made the inquiry as if he had no evil designs. He called together the

authorities among the Jews to learn of them where the prophets said the Christ would be born. And yet he was laying his plans to put to death the Messiah whom God had promised to send; he was making his plans to prevent God from carrying out his plans! Could mortal man manifest greater audacity? It was not as if some one through weakness or indifference failed to live up to God's requirements. Herod, like Pharaoh of old, was laying his plans to pit his wit and strength against the wisdom and power of Jehovah—seeking to prevent God from carrying out his plans. The chief priests and the scribes were able to refer him to the prophecy which told where the Christ was to be born. The prophecy they read to him is found in Mic. 5: 2; it states plainly that a ruler would come out of Bethlehem in the land of Judah. They understood this ruler to be the Christ; and yet it does not seem that the chief priests and scribes took any further interest in the matter. It is likely that they entertained the idea that Herod had evil designs against the young child. If they had that idea, they would be afraid to show any special interest in the prospects of a new king; for it would have been fatal to them to do so. Having learned where the Christ was to be born, he turns to question the wise men so as to locate the possible age of the newborn king. He desired all possible information about the star, and was seeking the information with murderous intent; but he was sufficiently crafty to keep his designs from the wise men. They departed for Bethlehem, believing that Herod sincerely desired to render homage to the newborn king. Not being tricky themselves, it is not strange that they thought Herod sincere; but Herod had so long practiced deception and cruelty that there was no sincerity in him. His conscience was so seared that it did not bother him. Like the people before the flood, he had reached that stage of depravity in which every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. He tried to use the wise men in his purpose to commit murder. A man is far gone in wickedness when he seeks to use innocent and unsuspecting men to aid him in a murderous plot. He had earnestly requested the wise men to find exactly where the young child was, pretending that he wanted to go and do him homage; but he wanted the information so that he would not fail to murder the one he sought. This man Herod, then an old man, had once been an innocent babe, and could have developed into a useful man; but by the practice of sin he had become a monster of cruelty and wickedness.

The Magi Find the Child and Worship Him (Verses 9-11)

From the prophecy cited by the chief priests and the scribes, the Magi had learned that Bethlehem was the birthplace of the newborn king. When they departed for Bethlehem the star again became their guide. McGarvey says, "The star which they had seen in the east had evidently disappeared before they reached Jerusalem, but now it reappeared when its guidance was needed." But it is more likely that the star disappeared because they yielded to a natural impulse to go to the royal family to seek the newborn king, instead of following the star. When they decided to follow the light the prophecy gave them, the star added its additional guidance. There has been a lot of useless speculation as to what that star was.

Even astronomy has been called on in an effort to decide the matter. Yet a little thought will show any one that it could not have been any one of the regular stars of the heavens; for any one of such stars would have seemed to stand over one house as much as another, or even over Jerusalem as well as over Bethlehem. That star was low enough for the wise men to determine the exact house over which it stood. It went before them till it stood over a certain house, leaving no room for doubt as to the house it designated. The Magi did not have to make any inquiries—their mission therefore did not become known to the public. It is no more incredible that a starlike appearance should guide them than that the children of Israel should be guided by a pillar of a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Everything was working for the safety of the babe. As the wise men did not have to make any inquiries and then left in the night, no one in Bethlehem was any the wiser by their visit to the babe. None of them therefore would be able to give Herod or his emissaries any information concerning the visit. We know not what revelation God had made to the wise men to enable them to know the significance of the star, but some sort of revelation was necessary. This, together with the prophecy of Micah and the definite guidance of the star, convinced them that the child they had found was no ordinary human being. In this conviction they did not hesitate to worship him; “and opening their treasures they offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.” They had not paid any such homage to Herod, and yet he was actually a reigning king. This difference shows that they regarded the child Jesus as more than a mere human being.

The Magi Disregard Herod's Request (Verse 12)

Having worshiped the child Jesus and presented to him their gifts, the wise men retired for the night; but God warned them in a dream not to make any report to Herod. Herod was usually in a position to enforce his requests or demands, but not so this time. “They departed into their own country another way.” It appears that they departed in the night immediately after the warning, and therefore no one in Bethlehem knew of their going—none could report to Herod which direction they went.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Before Jesus was born the angel announced his mission in few words—“He shall save his people from their sins.”

The whole plan of human redemption grew out of God's love for his helpless creatures—“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.”

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The song of the angels. (Luke 2: 13, 14.)

What if Jesus had not come?

John 3: 16, 17.

The Herods.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

The Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
What evidence have we that the Lord did not intend for us to celebrate annually the birth of Christ?
Why were Joseph and Mary in Bethlehem?
Give the incident of the shepherds and the angels.
Discuss the law of purification that took them to Jerusalem.

Verses 1, 2

Give what facts you can about Bethlehem.
Give what facts you can about the order of men called Magi.
How could the Magi of our lesson know the significance of the star?
Who was Herod?
Why would the wise men go to him?

Verse 3

Discuss verse 3.

Verses 4-8

What evidence that Herod thought the newborn king was the Christ?
What did he ask the chief priests and the scribes?
What prophecy did they read to him?
What was Herod planning to do?
What shows the enormity of his egotism?
What demand or request did he make of the wise men?
Discuss Herod's depravity.

Verses 9-11

What did the wise men then do?
What shows that the star was none of the regular stars?
What shows that the wise men regarded the child Jesus as more than mortal?

Verse 12

Discuss the facts of verse 12.
Discuss the reflections.

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