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GOSPEL ADVOCATE SERIES

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# Annual Lesson Commentary

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TWENTIETH ANNUAL VOLUME

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## A FOREWORD

In penning the last word of this, the twentieth volume of the Annual Lesson Commentary, the author realizes that it, like all human productions, has its imperfections; but he has labored to make it as helpful to Bible students as is humanly possible to do so. Its comments are meant to be suggestive rather than exhaustive, for it is best for the student to do some investigation and thinking for himself.

At the close of each lesson will be found "Topics for Investigation and Discussion," which may be used with profit in midweek prayer meetings and in teachers' meetings. This will help to stir up interest in the lessons, and will give teachers a better background for their work; besides, 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 1941

## FIRST QUARTER

|       |          |   |       |   |
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|       |          |   |       |  |
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| IV.   | "        | 26.—Civic Responsibility Regarding Beverage Alcohol | ..... | Deut. 5: 32, 33; 11: 26-28; Isa. 28: 1-6; Hab. 2: 12 |
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| XIII. | "        | 28.—The Christian's Hope                            | ..... | Isa. 9: 6, 7; John 1: 1-4, 10-14; 1 John 4: 9-11     |

# 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: 2. 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.
- Abihu** (God is Father), Num. 3: 2. Son of Aaron.
- 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.
- Abshalom** (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.
- Aeon** (springs), John 3: 23. A place near Salim.
- Agabus**, Acts 11: 28. A Christian prophet who came from Jerusalem.
- Agag**, 1 Sam. 15: 8. Title of the king of Amalek.
- Agrippa**, Acts 25: 13. One of the Herods.
- Ahab** (father's brother), 1 Kings 18: 1. 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), Josh. 7: 2. City lying east of Bethel, destroyed by Joshua.
- Alexander**, Mark 15: 21. Son of Simon, the Cyrenian.
- Alexandria** (from Alexander), Acts 18: 24. Capital of Egypt.
- Alpha** (first letter of Greek alphabet), Rev. 1: 8. It means the beginning.
- Altar**, Gen. 8: 20. Place for worship and sacrifice.
- Amaziah** (Jehovah is strong), 2 Kings 14: 1-20. Son of Joash.
- Ambassador** (messenger or agent), 2 Cor. 5: 20. A person commissioned.
- Amen** (true), Num. 5: 22. 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 Phoenician 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: 1. 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: 2. 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: 18. 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.
- Caiafas** (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.
- Calvary** (see Golgotha).
- 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.
- Chebar** (kēbār), Ezek. 1: 3. A river in the land of the Chaldeans.
- 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 6: 9. 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**, Mark 7: 11. 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: 10. One of the most ancient cities in the world, located in Syria.
- Daniel** (God is my judge), Dan. 1: 6. The fourth of "the greater prophets."
- Darius** (lord), Dan. 6: 1. The name of several kings of Media and Persia.
- David** (well beloved), 2 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.
- Diotrephes** (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: 1. 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.
- Eliphaz** (God is his strength), Job 4: 1. The oldest and wisest of Job's friends.
- 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: 52. 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.  
**Euraquilo**, Acts 27: 14. Compounded from two words meaning east and north.  
**Eutyclus** (fortunate), Acts 20: 9. A youth of Troas who went to sleep and fell out the window. Paul restored him to life.  
**Eve** (life), Gen. 2: 21. Name given to the first woman.  
**Exodus** (a going out). Name given to the second book of the Bible.  
**Exorcist** (casting out), Matt. 12: 27. One who pretended to cast out evil spirits.  
**Ezekiel** (God is strong or God doth strengthen), Ezek. 1: 3. The third of the major prophets.  
**Ezra** (help), Neh. 12: 1. Wrote the book which bears his name.

## F

- Felix** (happy), Acts 23: 26. A Roman officer who held Paul in prison.  
**Festus** (festival), Acts 24: 27. Roman officer who succeeded Felix.  
**First-born**, Ex. 13: 13. 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.  
**Gallo** (Latin name), Acts 18: 12. The Roman proconsul of Achaia when Paul was at Corinth.  
**Gamaliel** (recompense of God), Acts 5: 34. 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.  
**Gomorrhah** (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

- Habakkuk** (embrace), Hab. 1: 1. Eighth in order of the minor prophets.  
**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: 16. Party among the Jews who were supporters of the Herodian family.
- Herodias** (from Herod), Matt. 14: 1-11. Granddaughter of Herod the Great.
- Hezekiah** (Jehovah strengtheneth), 2 Kings 18: 6. 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: 19. 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.
- Jehoiakim** (Jehovah raises up), 2 Kings 24: 1, 2. Son of Josiah, king of Judah.
- Jehoshaphat** (Jehovah hath judged), 1 Kings 15: 24. Fourth king of Judah, son of Asa.
- Jehovah** (I Am, the Eternal Living One), Lev. 24: 16. 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. 3: 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 8: 3. The name of a woman.
- John the Baptist** (Jehovah's gift), Matt. 3: 1. A forerunner of Christ.
- John** (from Johanan), Luke 1: 13. 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 (,).
- Jotham** (Jehovah is perfect), 2 Kings 15: 32. Son of King Uzziah.
- 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: 26. Place where Miriam died, and the farthest point reached in the wandering in the wilderness.
- Kidron, or Kedron** (turbid), John 18: 1. 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: 29. Father of Leah and Rachel; father-in-law of Jacob.
- Laodicea** (justice of the people), Col. 4: 15. A town in the Roman province of Asia.
- Laodiceans**, Col. 4: 16; Rev. 3: 14. The inhabitants of Laodicea.
- Lazarus** (whom God helps), John 11: 1. Brother of Martha and Mary; lived at Bethany; raised from the dead by Jesus.
- Leah** (wearied), Gen. 29: 16. Daughter of Laban, first wife of Jacob.
- Lebanon** (white), Deut. 1: 7. Mountain range north of Palestine.
- 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), Col. 4: 14. Traveled with Paul and wrote the book that bears his name.
- Lycania** (landing of Lycanon, or wolf land), Acts 14: 11. A province in Asia Minor.

- Lydia (strife), Acts 16: 14. First European convert at Philippi.  
 Lysias (fr. Greek), Acts 23: 26. A Roman officer.  
 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.  
 Manaan (comfoter), Acts 13: 1. Foster brother of Herod and teacher and prophet in church at Antioch.  
 Manasseh (forgetting), Gen. 41: 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.  
 Micah (who is like Jehovah), Judges 17: 5. The sixth in order of the minor prophets.  
 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: 17. 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.  
 Nadab (liberal), Num. 3: 2. Eldest son of Aaron.  
 Nain (beauty), Luke 7: 11. A village of Galilee.  
 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: 18. 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: 9. 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.
- Pekah** (open-eyed), 2 Kings 15: 25. Son of Remaliah.
- 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.
- Perea**. A name of the country beyond the Jordan.
- Perga** (fr. Greek), Acts 13: 13. A city in Pamphylia.
- Pergamos** (height, elevation), Rev. 1: 11. A city of Mysia, about three miles to the north of the River Caicus.
- Pergamum**, Rev. 1: 11. Same as Pergamos.
- Persia** (pure, splendid), Ezek. 38: 5. Name given to an ancient empire.
- Peter** (a rock or stone), John 1: 42. Name given to Simon, the brother of Andrew, one of the twelve apostles.
- Pharaoh**, Ex. 1: 8. Common title of the kings of Egypt.
- Pharisees**, Matt. 15: 7. A religious sect among the Jews. They believed in a resurrection of the dead.

- Philadelphia** (brotherly love), Rev. 3: 9. Town on the borders of Lydia and Phrygia.
- Philemon** (loving), Col. 4: 9. Name of Christian to whom Paul addressed his epistle in behalf of Onesimus.
- Philetus** (beloved), 2 Tim. 2: 17. Associated with Hymeneus.
- Philip** (lover of horses), John 1: 44. One of the twelve apostles.
- Philistines** (immigrants), Jer. 47: 4. One of the tribes that inhabited Caphtor, or Crete.
- 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), Acts 11: 9. 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.
- Psalms** (song, praise), Luke 20: 42. Song of praise.
- Publican** (Roman taxgatherer), Luke 3: 12. Name of one who gathered taxes for the Roman government.
- Pyrrhus**, Acts 20: 4. The father of Sopater of Berea.

## Q

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

## R

- Rabbi** (master), Matt. 23: 7. Title signifying "teacher."
- Raca** (fool), Matt. 5: 22. A term of reproach.
- Rachel** (ewe, or sheep), Gen. 29: 31. Younger daughter of Laban, and beloved wife of Jacob.
- Rahab** (fierceness, pride), Isa. 51: 9. A name sometimes given to Egypt.
- Rebekah** (ensnarer), Gen. 22: 23. Sister of Laban, wife of Isaac.
- Red Sea** (a seaweed resembling wool), Ex. 14: 2. Body of water crossed by Israelites.
- Rehoboam** (enlarger of the people), 1 Kings 14: 21. Son of Solomon and first king of Judah.
- 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: 23. The seventh day of the week.
- Sabbath Day's Journey**, Acts 1: 12. About three-fourths of a mile.
- Sabbatical Year**, Ex. 23: 11. 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.
- Salome** (peaceful), Matt. 27: 56. The wife of Zebedee.
- Samaria** (watch mountain), 1 Kings 16: 24. Name of a city thirty miles north of Jerusalem; also of the country surrounding it.
- Samaritan** (watch mountain, Samaria), Luke 10: 33. An inhabitant of Samaria.
- Samson** (like the sun), Judges 15: 20. One of the strongest men; one of the judges of Israel.
- Samuel** (asked of God), 1 Sam. 3: 1-18. The last judge of Israel.
- Sanhedrin** (a council chamber), Matt. 26: 57. The supreme court of the Jewish nation.

- Sapphira (bright color, beautiful), Acts 5: 1-11. Wife of Ananias.  
 Sarah (princess), Gen. 20: 12. Wife of Abraham, mother of Isaac.  
 Sarai (my princess), Gen. 11: 29. First name of Sarah.  
 Sardis (red), Rev. 1: 11. A city of Asia Minor, and capital of Lydia.  
 Satan (adversary), Matt. 16: 23. Name applied to the devil.  
 Saul (desired), 2 Sam. 1: 23. Name of the first king of Israel; first name of the apostle Paul.  
 Sceva (implement), Acts 19: 14. A Jew residing at Ephesus when Paul visited that city.  
 Scribes (to write), 1 Kings 4: 3. Those who transcribed the law.  
 Scythian, Col. 3: 11. Name applied to the people who lived north of the Black Sea.  
 Septuagint (the seventy). The Greek Version of the Old Testament.  
 Sergius Paulus, Acts 13: 7. Name of the proconsul of Cyprus.  
 Sheba (an oath), 2 Sam. 20: 1-22. Name of queen who visited Solomon.  
 Shechem (back or shoulders), Gen. 33: 18. A city of Samaria.  
 Shem (name), Gen. 5: 32. The eldest son of Noah.  
 Sheshbazzar, Ezra 1: 8, 11. Persian name given to Zerubbabel.  
 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.  
 Sidon (Zidon), Gen. 10: 15. The Greek form of the Phoenician name, Zidon.  
 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: 33. Second son of Jacob; common name among the Jews.  
 Simon (hearing), Luke 4: 38. Another name for Peter.  
 Sinal (thorny), Ex. 19: 1. Mountain where the law was given.  
 Smyrna (myrrh), Rev. 2: 8-11. A city of Asia Minor, situated on Aegean Sea, forty miles north of Ephesus.  
 Sodom (burning), Mark 6: 11. Ancient city of Syria, destroyed by fire.  
 Solomon (peaceful), 2 Sam. 12: 24. David's son who succeeded him to the throne.  
 Sopater (savior of his father), Acts 20: 4. One of the companions of Paul.  
 Stephen (crown), Acts 6: 5. Name of one of the seven chosen at Jerusalem; the first Christian martyr.  
 Susanna (a lily). One of the women who ministered to Jesus.  
 Sycamore (mulberry), Amos 7: 14. A fruit tree in Palestine.  
 Symeon (Simon), Acts 13: 1. A teacher and prophet in the church at Antioch.  
 Synagogue (congregation), Matt. 13: 54. Place where the Jews met for worship.  
 Syntyche (with fate), Phil. 4: 2. Female member of the church at Philippi.  
 Syria, Judg. 10: 6. Name of country.  
 Syrophenician, Mark 7: 26. A mixed race of people.

## T

- Tabernacle (tent), Ex. 25: 9. Constructed by Moses as a place of worship.  
 Tabitha (gazelle), Matt. 9: 25; Mark 5: 41. Also called "Dorcas."  
 Tares (darnel), Matt. 13: 25. A weed similar to wheat in its early stages.  
 Tarshish, Jonah 1: 3. South of Spain.  
 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. 10: 3. One of the apostles.  
 Thyatira, Rev. 1: 11. 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 (worshiping 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: 29. 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: 34-46. 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**, Ezra 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), Ezra 2: 2. The head of the tribe of Judah at the time of the return from the Babylonian captivity.  
**Zeruiah** (Balsam), 1 Sam. 26: 6. Mother of Joab, sister of David.  
**Zidon**, or **Sidon**, Gen. 10: 15; Luke 6: 17. An ancient city of Phoenicia on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean.  
**Zophar** (chirper), Job 2: 11. One of Job's three friends.  
**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 UNIVERSAL GOSPEL: STUDIES IN LUKE  
(Second Half of a Six Months' Course)

AIM: To discover through the Gospel of Luke the warm human sympathy of Jesus and his regard for the earthly welfare and the eternal salvation of men, and to cultivate similar attitudes.

## Lesson I—January 5, 1941

## JESUS AND HUMAN AFFLICTION

Luke 13: 1-5, 10-17

1 Now there were some present at that very season who told him of the Gál-i-læ'ans, whose blood Pi'lâte had mingled with their sacrifices.

2 And he answered and said unto them, Think ye that these Gál-i-læ'ans were sinners above all the Gál-i-læ'ans, because they have suffered these things?

3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish.

4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Si-ló'am fell, and killed them, think ye that they were offenders above all the men that dwell in Jê-ru'sâ-lêm?

5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

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 Jê'sus 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 Jê'sus 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.—"We have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." (Heb. 4: 15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ex. 3: 7-12.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|              |    |   |
|--------------|----|---|
| December 30. | M. | Affliction Permitted (Luke 13: 1-9)         |
| December 31. | T. | Affliction Relieved (Luke 13: 10-17)        |
| January 1.   | W. | Affliction Overruled (John 9: 1-7)          |
| January 2.   | T. | Suffering Without Sinning (Job 1: 1, 20-22) |
| January 3.   | F. | Serving After Recovery (Mark 1: 29-31)      |
| January 4.   | S. | Affliction in View of Glory (Rom. 8: 18-23) |
| January 5.   | S. | God, the Great Healer (Psalm 103: 1-5)      |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 31.

*Place.*—Uncertain; probably somewhere in Judea.

*Persons.*—From chapter 12, verse 1, many thousands were gathered. The matters spoken of in verses 1-5 of our lesson seem to have occurred while the multitude was present. Jesus spoke to this multitude. In verses 10-17 Jesus was present with the worshipers in a synagogue.

*Lesson Links.*—Only verses 49-59 of the preceding chapter come between our last lesson and this. In these verses Jesus makes some striking statements. "I came to cast fire upon the earth; and what do I desire, if it is already kindled? . . . Think ye that I am come to give peace in the earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: for there shall be from henceforth five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. They shall be divided, father against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against her mother; mother in law against her daughter in law, and daughter in law against her mother in law." In Matthew's report we have this: "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." (10: 34.) In harmony with these statements of Jesus Paul said to Timothy, "Fight the good fight of the faith." (1 Tim. 6: 12.) Of himself he said, "I have fought the good fight." (2 Tim. 4: 7.) And yet Jesus is the Prince of Peace; "and he came and preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh." (Eph. 2: 17.) He came to make peace between God and man; there would then be peace between all that were at peace with God. But sin must be fought; evil must be opposed; false doctrine must be exposed. There must be division between the good and the bad, and sinners will be against the righteous. If there were no sin, there would be perfect peace on the earth; there would be no division, no strife; there would be nothing against which good people would need to wage war.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

## Repent or Perish (Verses 1-5)

*Galileans Slain (Verses 1-3).*—Nothing is now known of this slaying of some Galileans by Pilate save what is here told. As it was reported to Jesus as news, it must have been a then recent occurrence. The Jews of Galilee are said to have been the most turbulent of all the Jews, though the Jews generally were restless under the Roman yoke. There was therefore always danger of disturbances when the Jews gathered in Jerusalem for their annual feasts. These Galileans must have been raising a considerable disturbance, for it is not likely that Pilate would have killed peaceable worshipers. It is likely that they were making a demonstration against the Roman government. They were slain in the part of the temple in which animals for sacrifice were killed. For some of the Jews to be killed by the Romans and for the temple to be thus desecrated would be a horrible thing in the eyes of the Jews. And those who reported the matter to Jesus must have thought that he would do something about it, for many were expecting him to declare himself their king and take vengeance on their enemies.

"Think ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans?" The Galileans that were killed were sinners, but not worse than other Galileans. The Jewish nation as a whole had become so corrupt that it could not continue much longer. Repentance was the only chance for the nation. "Except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish." There is significance in the phrase, "in like manner." Their perishing would be in a manner similar to that of the Galileans; they would die by violent means. Between thirty-five and forty years later the words of the Lord were strikingly fulfilled when the Romans overran the land of the Jews.

*Another Incident Mentioned* (Verses 4, 5).—The falling of the tower of Siloam, crushing eighteen men, is not elsewhere mentioned. Siloam is just outside, and south of, Jerusalem. As Jesus mentioned the falling of the tower of Siloam, its fall must have been still fresh in the minds of his hearers. Were these eighteen men that were killed by the falling of this tower worse offenders than other men? It would seem that the people whom Pilate killed and those whom the falling wall killed, thought such things befell them because they were worse than other men. Jerusalem had many thousands of inhabitants that were as bad as those upon whom the tower fell. Unless they repented, they would perish in a similar way—"in like manner." Verse 5 is a repetition of the sentiments of verse 3.

Of course repentance is necessary to save people from future punishment—the eternal punishment; but that punishment is not what Jesus was here talking about. That perishing will not be like that suffered by those mentioned in our text. They perish by violent means; unless the Jews repented, they would in a like manner perish. If the reader wishes to see how this prediction was literally fulfilled, he will find a full account of it in Josephus' account of the overthrow of the Jewish nation and the destruction of Jerusalem. It was a fearful warning that Jesus here delivered to the Jews. This warning was later repeated in greater detail, as the reader may see by referring to Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21.

### Jesus Teaches in a Synagogue (Verse 10)

The word *synagogue* is derived from a Greek word that denotes an assembly, a congregation. It differs little, if any, from the Greek word from which we have *church*. Synagogues and the synagogue worship were not required in the law of Moses. "The precise age of the introduction of synagogues among the Israelites it does not appear easy to determine. In all probability, however, they had their origin about the period of the exile; and there were then peculiar circumstances which called for their establishment. Deprived of the solemnities of their national worship, yet still retaining their religious convictions, and keenly feeling the loss they had endured, earnestly, too, longing and praying for a restoration of their forfeited privileges, the captive Israelites could not help meeting together for the purpose of mutual sympathy, counsel, and aid, or of prayer and other devout exercises."—Bible Encyclopedia. In the days of Christ and his apostles every town and city in Palestine had its synagogue or synagogues. By that time the term *synagogue* was applied mostly to the house, and not to the assembly. At least once the term is applied to the assembly. (Acts 13: 43.)

It was an established custom with Jesus to attend these synagogue services. (Luke 4: 16.) Where the synagogue was that is mentioned in the tenth verse of our lesson we are not informed. It was on a Sabbath day that the incidents of this section of our lesson occurred.

### Jesus Heals a Woman (Verses 11-13)

"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." None of the other writers mentions this incident. The woman was in a desperate condition. She had been thus afflicted so long that she must have long ago given up all hope of ever recovering from her affliction. Many people now, who are much less afflicted, give up all efforts to be at the place of worship; some become soured on everything. This woman must have been a rare character, worthy of the blessing about to be bestowed on her. It seems that in the midst of his teaching Jesus saw her. "And when Jesus saw her, he called her, and said to her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." He also laid his hands on her, and she was immediately healed of her infirmity. As Jesus performed miracles to prove that God was with him and that he was therefore sent of God, he arranged this healing in such a way all in the synagogue could witness the healing. The people, knowing the woman, knew that her healing was real. Had she been a stranger in their midst, they might have thought that Jesus had arranged for her to be present and to pretend to be thus afflicted, and that the whole affair was a fraud. All could see that a real miracle had been performed.

### The Ruler of the Synagogue Protests (Verse 14)

The ruler of the synagogue knew that a real miracle had been performed; but instead of rejoicing that such a blessing had come to this suffering woman, he was moved with indignation—Jesus had broken the tradition of the elders by healing her on the Sabbath day. Jesus had not violated the law of Moses, for it did not prohibit acts of mercy nor the practicing of the healing art on the Sabbath. In the tradition of the elders many refinements had been added to the law, one of which was, that no effort was to be made to cure the sick nor relieve human suffering on the Sabbath. Jesus kept the law, but ignored their traditions. The ruler of the synagogue regarded what Jesus did as work; so he said, "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."

### His Adversaries Put to Shame (Verses 15-17)

The Lord's reply to the ruler of the synagogue was a severe rebuke. "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?" They would not allow an animal to suffer for drink—the tradition of the elders allowed them to relieve the suffering of animals, but not of people. There is something wrong with a religion that makes its devotees indifferent to human suffering. They would loose their animals from the stall and lead them to water on the Sabbath to prevent their suffering. "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?" There is a play on words here; they loosed their animals to take them to water, Jesus loosed this daughter of Abraham from Satan's bond. Jesus mentioned the fact that the woman was a daughter of Abraham to make it more apparent to the ruler and all the worshipers that he did right in releasing her from her infirmity. His speech put his adversaries to shame; even the indignant ruler of the synagogue was silenced. The people rejoiced at what was done; in their estimation Jesus had done a glorious thing. It does seem that the ruler of the synagogue, since he saw that a real miracle of healing had been performed, would have recognized that God's hand was in the matter, and would therefore approve what was done; but these leaders of the Jews were usually so full of prejudice and a feeling of their own importance that they would not accept any evidence or testimony that did not agree with their own narrow notions.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

To apply Luke 13: 3, 5 to the perishing of the impenitent in the world to come is not handling aright the word of the Lord. He was speaking of the perishing that would come upon the Jews in the destruction of their nation. Other passages show the need of repentance to save from eternal punishment.

Jesus was moved with compassion at the sight of human suffering. To him sickness, deformity, and all other bodily ailments were real, and not mere delusions of the mortal mind.

Though he was moved with compassion at the sight of human suffering his miracles of healing were not performed primarily to relieve suffering. If that were so, he would cure all sick folks even now, or cause that no one would ever be afflicted in any way. His miracles were performed as signs that God was with him.

It seems that the tradition of the elders came into being after the Jews returned from the Babylonian exile. They claimed that certain laws given by Moses were never written, but were handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. Even had Moses delivered such laws it is easy to see how they would have become corrupted or lost sight of. However, the Pharisees exalted these traditions even above the written law. (Mark 7: 8, 9.) It is a pity that religious people will allow their own customs and laws to have more weight with them than has the law of God.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

How and why the Jewish nation perished.

Repentance.

Sign miracles and others.

How custom and man's laws hinder obedience to God.

### QUESTIONS

#### Lesson Settings

Give facts about time, place, and persons.

Discuss matters dealt with in Lesson Links.

#### Verses 1-5

What news was brought to Jesus? Repeat and discuss the reply Jesus made.

Discuss the significance of the phrase "in like manner."

What other incident did Jesus mention?  
When and how was the prediction of Jesus fulfilled?

## Verse 10

To what did the term "synagogue" originally apply and why?

To what did it later come to be mostly applied?

Give the custom of Jesus with reference to synagogue worship.

## Verses 11-13

Tell about the afflicted woman.

Tell about her cure, and why done so openly.

## Verse 14

How did the ruler of the synagogue feel and what did he say?

## Verses 15-17

What reply did the Lord make to the ruler?

What did the people think of the incident?

Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson II—January 12, 1941

## CHRIST'S VALUATION OF PERSONALITY

Luke 14: 1-14

1 And it came to pass, when he went into the house of one of the rulers of the Phār'i-sēes on a sabbath to eat bread, that they were watching him.

2 And behold, there was before him a certain man that had the dropsy.

3 And Jē'sus answering spake unto the lawyers and Phār'i-sēes, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath, or not?

4 But they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go.

5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a well, and will not straightway draw him up on a sabbath day?

6 And they could not answer again unto these things.

7 And he spake a parable unto those that were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief seats; saying unto them,

8 When thou art bidden of any man to a marriage feast, sit not down in the chief seat; lest haply a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him.

9 And he that bade thee and him shall come and say to thee, Give this man place; and then thou shalt begin with shame to take the lowest place.

10 But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place; that when he that hath bidden thee cometh, he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have glory in the presence of all that sit at meat with thee.

11 For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

12 And he said to him also that had bidden him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor rich neighbors; lest haply they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee.

13 But when thou makest a feast, bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind;

14 And thou shalt be blessed; because they have not *wherewith* to recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"*Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment?*" (Matt. 6: 25.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 6: 25-34.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|             |    |   |
|-------------|----|---|
| January 6.  | M. | Significance of a Sabbath Cure (Luke 14: 1-6)   |
| January 7.  | T. | Ambition at a Feast (Luke 14: 7-11)             |
| January 8.  | W. | Hospitality Without Recompense (Luke 14: 12-14) |
| January 9.  | T. | Appraising Life Correctly (Matt. 6: 24-30)      |
| January 10. | F. | The Higher Values (Jer. 9: 23, 24)              |
| January 11. | S. | Vanity of Vanities (Eccles. 2: 1-11)            |
| January 12. | S. | What Is Man? (Psalm 8)                          |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 31.

*Place.*—The house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees. We are not informed where this Pharisee lived.

*Persons.*—Jesus, a ruler of the Pharisees, a man with the dropsy, and other guests at the feast given by this ruler of the Pharisees. This Pharisee might have been a ruler of a synagague, but most likely was a member of the Sanhedrin.

*Lesson Links.*—Someone asked Jesus, "Are they few that are saved?" (Luke 13: 23.) Jesus replied, "Strive to enter in by the narrow door: for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able." If many seek to enter in by the narrow door and fail, what of that vast throng that make no effort to enter? "Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it." (Matt. 7: 13, 14.) The way of life is the way of truth; and truth is always narrow, whether it be a historic truth, a scientific truth, or a moral truth. And a man is not narrow in any wrong sense, if he holds to the truth on any subject; nor is he broad-minded, if he ignores facts and truths. No one would be called broad-minded, if he should insist that two plus two amounts to any sum that you want it to be. Two and two is four, whether we like it or not. But a person should be broad-minded enough to accept the truth at all times. However for the truth of God to be of any benefit to us, we must know it and love it. The Jews failed because they did not love God and his word; for that reason all sorts of corruption prevailed. Because of this Jesus said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her own brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." The leaders in Jerusalem had become such hardened sinners, that they not only rejected the word of the Lord, but killed the prophets that brought it to them.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

## Jesus Dines with a Pharisee (Verse 1)

We are told that the Jews arranged to have an abundance of the best of food on the day of the Sabbath. This was all prepared the day before the Sabbath. As no work was done on the Sabbath, they had leisure to linger at the table and to enjoy to the full their abundance of the well-prepared food. This ruler of the Pharisees invited Jesus to dine with him; others were also invited. The fact that others were invited on this occasion shows that the ruler did not invite Jesus into his home for a private conference. He was not seeking a heart-to-heart talk; he was not seeking to know more about the teaching of Jesus. No motive so honorable as that moved him. Of course, his apparent hospitality had not deceived Jesus. The majority of the Pharisees, especially of the leaders and rulers, were bitterly opposed to Jesus, and were constantly seeking for

grounds on which they might accuse him. On this occasion "they were watching him." They were watching him carefully—eyeing him closely, for so the word indicates. They had their trap set.

### Jesus Heals a Man (Verses 2-6)

A man with the dropsy was at the feast; so also were lawyers and Pharisees. The whole arrangement indicates a prearranged plan to entrap Jesus. The sick man was the bait; the lawyers and the Pharisees would be the witnesses. It was not through sympathy for the sick man he was there; they were not hoping that he would be cured for his own benefit. They believed that Jesus would heal him even on the day of the Sabbath, and that was contrary to their unwritten law. Their scheme shows to what degree of baseness extreme religious prejudices and bigotry will drive people.

"The conduct of the Pharisee was most execrable. Professing *friendship* and *affection*, he invited our blessed Lord to his table, merely that he might have a more favorable opportunity of watching his conduct, that he might accuse him, and take away his life. In eating and drinking, people feel generally less restraint than at other times, and are apt to converse more freely. The man who can take such an advantage over one of his *own guests*, must have a baseness of soul, and a fellness of malice, of which, we would have thought, for the honor of human nature, that devils alone were capable. . . . Probably the insidious Pharisee had brought this dropsical man to the place, not doubting that our Lord's eye would affect his heart, and that he would instantly cure him; and then he could most plausibly accuse him for a breach of the Sabbath. If this were the case, and it is likely, how deep must have been the perfidy and malice of the Pharisee."—Clark.

While the lawyers and Pharisees were watching Jesus to see what he would do, he surprised them with a searching question, which made them realize that they were no longer masters of the situation: "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath, or not?" They decided that it was prudent to remain silent. If they should say it was not lawful, Jesus could say, "Why, then, did you bring this man here to be healed?" If they said that it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath, they went back on their tradition, and then could find no fault with Jesus for healing the man. Without further words Jesus healed the man.

Then Jesus showed, by a question, the inconsistency and absurdity of the tradition of the elders. "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a well, and will not straightway draw him up on a sabbath day?" This question is a little different from the question about animals in the last lesson. It would require much heavier work to draw an ass or an ox out of a well than to lead them to water; yet they would do that very thing on the Sabbath. They again held their peace; their carefully laid plan had come to naught. Jesus then proceeded to give these self-important men some much-needed lessons on table manners.

### Humility versus Self-Importance (Verses 7-11)

Too often the man who sees a fault in another and tries to correct it is called a faultfinder. Though Jesus was a guest in the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, he found fault with other guests, "when

he marked how they chose out the chief seats." There were places of honor at the table, and the guests were pushing forward to get into these places. Jesus took occasion to give them a lesson on proper conduct. "When thou art bidden of any man to a marriage feast, sit not down in the chief seat." Jesus made it less personal by giving directions concerning conduct at a marriage feast. At such formal feasts the master of ceremonies would arrange the guests, giving the more honorable the chief places of honor. If a man overrated his importance, and took a place of honor, he would be invited to a lower seat; that would be humiliating indeed, and a cause of shame. It would be much more fitting to take the lowest seat. If he took the lowest seat, he could not be put to shame by being asked to take a lower seat; if he were not invited to a higher seat, he has escaped being humiliated. If he merited a higher seat, the master of ceremonies would say, "Friend, go up higher." He would thus be publicly honored.

It was a parable Jesus had spoken; there was a deeper significance in what he said than mere table manners. He was showing God's method of dealing with people. He himself states a fundamental law of God: "For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." But it is sad that the spirit here condemned is often manifested in members of the church, and sometimes even in leaders. Like Diotrephes, they love to have the preeminence. Before they learned the nature of Christ's reign, James and John asked that they might have the highest places in the Lord's kingdom. They were looking for a worldly kingdom, and it was natural that they should want positions of honor in that kingdom; but it is singular now that a man who knows the nature of the kingdom and who knows what Christ said about seeking positions of honor should, as some do, so earnestly seek to have the preeminence. However, such a spirit makes it utterly impossible for one to be 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.) We gain the glory of men by advocating and doing the things that please them. "For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? or am I striving to please men? if I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ." (Gal. 1: 10.) The desire for popularity has ruined many men, who could have been useful servants of God. We do men a great disservice when we serve men instead of God.

### Concerning Giving Feasts (Verses 12-14)

From the remarks Jesus made both to the guests and his host, it seems that the whole atmosphere of that feast was wrong. It seems that making feasts was more common then than now.

A normal person is a social being; and yet his social nature or feelings is somewhat exclusive. Everyone finds some people with whom he does not care to associate. A social gathering is more pleasant when made up of kindred spirits. When therefore a person makes a feast for social purposes, he invites those whose company he enjoys. Of course, if he is a social climber, that desire will influence his invitations.

But does the Lord prohibit all social feasts? It does not seem so, for he himself attended such feasts. By invitation he and his

disciples attended a marriage feast at Cana of Galilee, and took an active part in the affair. (John 2: 1-11.) He with many other guests attended a great feast made for him by Levi (Matthew). (Luke 5: 29.) He also attended other feasts, as the reader will find by searching. What then? By a peculiar figure of speech Jesus sometimes denied a necessary thing so that by contrast he might give the greater emphasis to something else. Notice this: "Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life." (John 6: 27.) Certainly Jesus did not mean to prohibit working for our food; yet the command is as emphatic as the command not to make a feast for the characters named in our lesson. Do not make working for food that perishes your main business, but rather labor for the food that abides unto eternal life. Apply that same principle of interpretation to this section of our lesson, and you can see the significance of what Jesus says. Make up your mind to give more attention to helping those who need help rather than enjoying feasts with your friends, your brethren, and your rich neighbors. Feed the poor and helpless. Such feasts may not be socially what one likes, but they have spiritual values. If you make a feast for social reasons, that is the only reward you get out of it; and if you give a feast, hoping that you will be called to a similar feast, that is the only reward you get. But if you make a feast for such unfortunates as mentioned for the sake of doing them good, knowing that no earthly reward from them is possible, you shall be recompensed in the resurrection of the just. We can distribute food to the needy, thus giving them a feast without calling them together. To those on the right hand Jesus will say in the great day of accounts, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. . . . Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me." (Matt. 25: 34-40.)

### SOME REFLECTIONS

The lawyers and the Pharisees were very exacting respecting the forms of the law and their tradition; but inwardly they were self-righteous, corrupt, and unjust. They "left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith." (Matt. 23: 23.)

There is something radically wrong with a man's religion when it drives out of his heart all sympathy, kindness, and mercy. The hatred of the lawyers and the Pharisees toward Jesus was greater than their desire to see a sufferer healed.

Jesus put a higher value on man than on animals. "How much then is a man of more value than a sheep! Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day." (Matt. 12: 12.) There is something of vast worth in man, else God would not have been mindful of him.

A life spent in entertaining and being entertained is an empty and useless life. The satisfaction that comes from knowing that one is of help to his fellow man is some reward within itself. How useless must a person feel who never does anything useful! How boring such a life must be!

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Social customs among the Jews in New Testament times.  
 Discuss the lawyers of that period.  
 The attitude of Jesus toward false doctrine and wrong practice.  
 Our duty toward false doctrine and wrong practices.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
 What question was asked Jesus?  
 Give his reply; also a similar statement found in Matthew.  
 Discuss the narrowness of truth.  
 Why did the Jewish nation fail?  
 Repeat the lament of Jesus.

#### Verse 1

Who invited Jesus to dine with him?  
 Why were they watching Jesus?

#### Verses 2-6

Who were present at this feast?  
 What seems to have been the motive in giving that feast?  
 What question did Jesus ask those present?  
 Why could they not afford to answer?

#### Verses 7-11

When is a person not a faultfinder in an objectionable sense?  
 What did Jesus say to the guests?  
 Discuss the lesson we get from this.

#### Verses 12-14

What did Jesus say concerning making feasts?  
 Discuss man as a social being.  
 Do you think the language of Jesus prohibits making feasts for the classes he names?  
 What peculiar form of speech did Jesus sometimes use? Give examples.  
 Name ways in which we can make feasts for the needy.  
 Discuss what the Judge will say at the last day concerning helping those who need.  
 Discuss the reflections.

### Lesson III—January 19, 1941

## THE SLIGHTED INVITATION

Luke 14: 15-24

15 And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

16 But he said unto him, A certain man made a great supper; and he bade many:

17 And he sent forth his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

18 And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a field, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee have me excused.

19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused.

20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.  
 21 And the servant came, and told his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and maimed and blind and lame.

22 And the servant said, Lord, what thou didst command is done, and yet there is room.

23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and constrain them to come in, that my house may be filled.

24 For I say unto you, that none of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Come; for all things are now ready.” (Luke 14: 17.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 55: 1-7.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|             |    |  |
|-------------|----|--|
| January 13. | M. | The Gospel Invitation (Rev. 22: 17)      |
| January 14. | T. | The Guests Invited (Luke 14: 15-17)      |
| January 15. | W. | The Invitation Slighted (Luke 14: 18-20) |
| January 16. | T. | Widening the Invitation (Luke 14: 21-24) |
| January 17. | F. | The Great Wedding (Matt. 22: 2-10)       |
| January 18. | S. | Everyone Invited (Rom. 10: 11-15)        |
| January 19. | S. | The Invitation Broadcast (Isa. 55: 1-3)  |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 31.

*Place.*—The house of a ruler of the Pharisees. Where this ruler lived is not known.

*Persons.*—Jesus, a ruler of the Pharisees, and a number of guests, including lawyers and Pharisees. See verses 1-14.

*Lesson Links.*—The purpose of Christ's coming into the world and the nature of the kingdom announced by John the Baptist, and also by Christ, need not be misunderstood. The purpose of his coming, including his death, is stated in such passages as the following: Matt. 20: 28; John 3: 16, 17; Gal. 4: 5; Eph. 2: 14-18; 5: 25, 26; Titus 2: 14.

Both John and Jesus announced the near approach of the kingdom. Neither of them spoke of it as a secular, or material, kingdom. Of course we have only a brief outline of what John preached, but enough to show that he set forth the spiritual nature of the kingdom, and that Jews as such were not to be its citizens. Children of Abraham were to be the citizens of that kingdom, but John gave the multitudes to understand that fleshly descent from Abraham would count for nothing: "He said therefore to the multitudes that went out to be baptized of him. Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." (Luke 3: 7, 8.) God was able of the stones to raise up children to Abraham, but such children would not be children of Abraham after the flesh—they certainly would not be fleshly descendants of Abraham. In some other sense they would be children of Abraham—children of Abraham in a spiritual sense. Fleshly descent from Abraham would therefore count for nothing in the kingdom which John announced.

It should not be surprising to anyone, that the Jews, even the disciples of John and Christ, failed to see that the kingdom of Christ was to be a spiritual kingdom; such a kingdom was altogether outside the range of their thinking. The only kingdoms that they had ever known anything about had a visible, earthly head, a local seat of government, and had geographical limitations. Nor could they at first grasp the idea that there were to be spiritual children of Abraham; hence, the only seed of Abraham they could think of was the fleshly descendants of Abraham. No one should therefore use the ignorance of the Jews and of the early disciples as a basis for an argument to prove that the kingdom of Christ was to have a visible head and a local seat of government like other kingdoms.

**COMMENTS ON THE LESSON****"Blessed Is He" (Verse 15)**

This lesson is directly connected with last Sunday's lesson. Jesus had been giving his host directions concerning the giving of feasts. It appears that someone present believed that Jesus would be king, and that the principles he had laid down concerning the giving of feasts would prevail in the kingdom over which Jesus would rule; and he expressed his delight in the prospects of such a state of affairs. "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." He thought that to eat bread—to live—in such a kingdom would fill the cup of happiness. Doubtless he had reference to the food for the physical body; but that is not the bread for the spiritual man in the kingdom of God. The bread which Jesus would give in the kingdom of God not only would sustain spiritual life, but would give spiritual life. "For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world. They said therefore unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." (John 6: 33-35.) Jesus is the bread that meets all the requirements of spiritual life.

**A Great Supper Prepared—Many Invited (Verses 16, 17)**

This is a parable of the kingdom of God, spoken in answer to what the guest said about the blessedness of the one who should eat bread in the kingdom of God. "A certain man made a great supper." Nothing was lacking in that supper; all that could be desired was there in abundance. It illustrates the great provisions that would be prepared for those in the kingdom of God. As the kingdom had not then been set up, the feast had not then been fully prepared, nor had a full revelation then been made as to what the invited guests might expect. "And he bade many." It was the custom to inform the desired guests that they would be expected to be at a feast to be given; then when the feast was prepared and ready to be served, the expected guests were invited to come. Servants were sent out to say to them, "Come; for all things are now ready." When the guests had been informed that the feast was ready and invited to come, the next move was theirs. All these things are true of the gospel feast. When the gospel feast was fully prepared in the kingdom of God, the Lord sent his servants, the apostles and others, to say to the people, "Come; for all things are now ready." When that announcement was made to the people, the next move was theirs. If they did not come, no one was to blame but themselves.

**They All Began to Make Excuses (Verses 18-20)**

"They all with one consent began to make excuse." They began to *beg off*, to *ask to be excused*, for so is the force of the original. When people do not want to do a thing, and yet feel that they should do it, it is an easy matter to find excuses in plenty; but excuses usually fool no one but the person making them. The excuses mentioned in this parable are of a business and social nature. Too often these excuses are called light and frivolous; but we should remember that this parable was spoken by the Lord. Let us not accuse him of selecting the most frivolous excuses that people would

make, lest we reflect on the Lord, and lest we also encourage some one to say, "Of course such foolish excuses should not hinder any sensible person, but I have a real excuse, one which the Lord will surely accept." Hence, to belittle the excuses of this parable is to encourage people to offer what they consider real excuses. The excuses of the parable are such excuses as men of that time were most likely to make. Business and social affairs now, as then, keep people from attending the gospel feast.

Sometimes a man's business is not very prosperous, and he feels that he must give it his whole time and thought in order to make a living. He therefore feels that he has an excuse for neglecting Bible study, the Lord's day worship, and other religious duties. Or he may be so set on becoming rich that he gives no time nor thought to the service of God. A man should allow neither poverty nor riches to rob him of his loyalty to the Lord. "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me: lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is Jehovah? or lest I be poor, and steal, and use profanely the name of my God." (Prov. 30: 8, 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." (1 Tim. 6: 9.) But whether for business or social reasons people are much given to making excuses.

"The first said unto him, I have bought a field, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee have me excused." It is hardly reasonable to suppose that Jesus selected a man for a part in this parable, that was so foolish as to buy outright a field that he had never seen. People in Palestine lived in towns and cities, and went out to their farms. This man might have owned his farm for some time, and would go out often to see it—to see that everything was moving along right. Some farmers even today, though living on the farm, go out Lord's day morning to "see" their fields. Of course this man could have waited till after the feast to see his field; he was merely making an excuse for not going to the feast of his neighbor. He was more interested in his farm than in his neighbor's feast.

Another invited guest had bought five yoke of oxen, and was going to prove them. The language shows that they were under yoke when he bought them. Like other teamsters, this man wanted to give them a thorough test. That testing could have waited till after the feast, but he was more interested in his oxen than in his neighbor's feast; yet he, like the other, did not want to abruptly refuse to attend his neighbor's feast. Hence, he sought to justify his nonattendance. This man, as also the other, represents a large class of people who know they should be Christians, but are more interested in other things.

Another had married a wife. He did not ask the servant to have him excused. "I cannot come." This was not so much a social excuse as a domestic excuse. Perhaps he thought that a provision in the law of Moses would release him from any outside obligations. "When a man taketh a new wife, he shall not go out in the host, neither shall he be charged with any business: he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer his wife whom he hath taken." (Deut. 24: 5.) He could easily reason, that if recent marriage released him from military or business obligations for one year, that he might be with his wife, certainly he was under no social obligations that would take him from her. It was evidently a feast for

men, else the man would have been invited to bring his wife to the feast. Many a wife or husband is kept from obeying the Lord by an unbelieving companion.

It should be noted that the servant who was sent out to call the invited guests had no right to accept anyone's excuse; the people who were invited recognized that fact. When he had told the invited guests that the feast was ready, and had invited them to come, his duty to them ended. The same thing is true now with reference to the Lord's servant. He cannot excuse people for not accepting the Lord's invitation; neither can he rightfully seek to ease the consciences of any who refuse the gospel invitation.

### Others Called to the Feast (Verses 21-24)

The servant reported to his master what these excuse makers had said. Some had said to the servant, "I pray thee have me excused"; but if this servant made any plea for these excuse makers, he failed to influence his master.

It is thought by some that the first invited guests represented the Jews; but the attitude of the majority of the Jews is represented by those who were first invited in the parable of the king who made a marriage feast for his son, as told in Matthew 22: 1-14. It does not seem that the parable of our lesson is meant to represent the people of any certain nationality. People who make excuses are found among all peoples and nations.

The attitude of the invited guests angered the master of the feast. His neighbors had treated his feast with contempt. The feast was ready and waiting, and yet there were no guests. Something had to be done about it. "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and maimed and blind and lame." This was done, and still there was room. Another call went out; this time, to the drifters and wayfarers—to any who had nowhere else to go.

Jesus gave this parable to illustrate who would and who would not "eat bread in the kingdom of God." Those who made excuses were left out. "For I say unto you, that none of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper." Hence, only those who respond to the gospel call enjoy the blessings in the kingdom of God. The lesson of this parable should cause us all to think seriously when we are tempted to make any excuse that we think will justify our failure to do our duty. An excuse never justifies a failure.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

A parable is a comparison. Things with which people were familiar were used to illustrate to them things with which they were not familiar. Material things were used to illustrate spiritual things. It was an approach to the unknown through the known. But of course it was never meant that everything in a parable was to represent some spiritual fact or truth.

The bitter enemies of Jesus the Christ are not taken into account in the parable of this lesson. Those who made excuse were not outspoken enemies of the man who made the feast. They were simply more interested in their own affairs than in the feast that had been so graciously prepared for them. But infinitely greater things have been prepared for those who answer the gospel call.

How foolish are they that prefer the material things of this life! How poor their sense of values!

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John 2: 15, 16.)

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Teaching by parables—pressing parables too far.  
How this parable illustrates the freedom of the human will.  
Excuses people offer for not being Christians.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
What did Jesus and John announce as to the kingdom?  
What proof that Jews as such were not to be citizens of that kingdom?  
Why did the Jews fail to see the spiritual nature of the kingdom?

#### Verse 15

What did a certain man at the feast say, and why?  
What is the bread of the kingdom of God?

#### Verses 16, 17

Give the substance of verses 16 and 17.

Discuss the significance of the phrase, "All things are now ready."

#### Verses 18-20

What purpose do excuses serve?  
Discuss each of the excuses here given.  
Name some excuses offered today for not being Christians.

#### Verses 21-24

What request had they made of the servant?  
What effect did his report have on his master?  
Discuss the moves that were then made to secure the necessary guests.  
What did the master say of those who made excuses?  
Tell how this applies to people in their treatment of the gospel call.  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson IV—January 26, 1941

### CHRIST'S CONCERN FOR THE LOST

Luke 15: 1-10

1 Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto him to hear him.

2 And both the Phār'i-sēes and the scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

3 And he spake unto them this parable, saying,

4 What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

5 And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and his neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.

7 I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no repentance.

8 Or what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a lamp, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she find it?

9 And when she hath found it, she calleth together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost.

10 Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 19: 10.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 10: 11-18.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|             |    |  |
|-------------|----|--|
| January 20. | M. | The Friend of Sinners (Luke 15: 1, 2)            |
| January 21. | T. | The Lost Sheep Found (Luke 15: 3-7)              |
| January 22. | W. | The Lost Coin Recovered (Luke 15: 8-10)          |
| January 23. | T. | The Lost Son Restored (Luke 15: 21-24)           |
| January 24. | F. | A Publican Saved (Luke 19: 5-10)                 |
| January 25. | S. | A Publican Serving (Matt. 9: 9-13)               |
| January 26. | S. | Christ's Concern for Jerusalem (Luke 13: 34, 35) |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 31.

*Place.*—Some place in Perea.

*Persons.*—Jesus, the publicans and sinners, and the Pharisees and the scribes.

*Lesson Links.*—In studying the question of saving the lost, there are two sides to consider; namely, what God through Jesus the Christ has done and is doing to save the lost, and what the lost must do to escape their lost condition. In the body of the lesson attention will be given to some of the things God has done and is doing for the lost. Some general principles governing man's side of the matter are laid down in chapter 14, verses 25 to 35.

On account of our natural affections and our use of the word *hate*, verse 26 seems to some to require an impossibility. “If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” In scripture usage the word *hate* sometimes refers to attitudes instead of feelings, or emotions, implying an attitude of indifference or disregard. Examples: “He that spareth his rod hateth his son.” (Prov. 13: 24.) If he does not seek to correct and guide his son, he is indifferent toward him—disregards him. “Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul.” (Prov. 29: 24.) He disregards his own soul—treats it with indifference. And if people, no matter how closely related to us they may be, would give us wrong counsel, disregard them. Jesus is stating a contrast. Disregard people and even your own life. What then? “Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.”

Two courses, or ways, are open to the lost sinner when the Lord says to him, “Come, follow me.” He can take up his cross and follow Christ, or he can undertake to map out a course of his own. Or, according to the figure Jesus uses, he can undertake to build a tower, or castle, of his own; but before undertaking such a task, he should count the cost, and see whether he has sufficient resources to finish such a tower. Jesus is not admonishing the sinner to count the cost of becoming a Christian, but the cost of not obeying the Lord—the cost of launching out on his own resources. Enquiring sinners were never told to sit down and count the cost of becoming Christians. Such words as “the same day,” “today,” “the same hour,” “now,” express the urgency of immediate obedience. And when the call comes the sinner must surrender to the Lord, or go to war with him. The best thing to do is to surrender at once; but if he

feels inclined to join issue with the Lord, he should first take counsel whether he can go against one who can so easily defeat him. The sinner cannot succeed in a war with Jehovah. It is best to give up everything else, and follow the Lord. "So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." And the disciple must be salt—must exert a saving influence over others.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### The Pharisees and the Scribes Murmur Against Jesus (Verses 1, 2)

The origin of the sect of the Pharisees is not clearly known. It seems that the sect originated soon after the return from the Babylonian exile. If you will consult Webster's dictionary or any good Bible dictionary you will see that the name Pharisee is from Hebrew and Greek words that mean, to separate. It is supposed therefore that the sect originated with a group of sincere Jews who sought to separate themselves from the corruptions of the masses of the people. In their efforts to maintain purity of life and of worship, they easily drifted into the feeling that they were purer and more righteous than others of their nation. They continued to be very strict in the outward observance of certain forms and ceremonies, but neglected reverence for God and love for man. It seems that the scribes belonged to the sect of the Pharisees. Of the scribes it is said, "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 power was very great."—Bible Encyclopedia. The scribes and the Pharisees were persistent enemies of Jesus.

As the publicans were tax collectors for the despised Romans, the scribes and the Pharisees despised them. From the standpoint of a Pharisee a sinner was one who, for some reason, had been turned out of the synagogue. Neither publicans nor sinners therefore had membership in any synagogue. With the Pharisees to be a religious outcast was also to be a social outcast. It does not seem that a Pharisee ever tried to restore a "sinner" to membership in a synagogue. A Pharisee thought himself defiled if he came into touch with a publican or sinner. Hence, their complaint against Jesus: "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." In the eyes of the Pharisees and scribes such conduct thoroughly unfitted Jesus for being a teacher and leader of men. With them, to eat with such characters was to endorse them.

### Parable of the Lost Sheep (Verses 3-6)

To many people of today it would seem that this parable of the lost sheep overrates the importance and value of a sheep, but not so, if we take into consideration the conditions and circumstances prevailing in Palestine and surrounding countries in the days of

Jesus. Some of their offerings were made from their flocks. From the wool came much of their clothing, and sheepskins supplied many of their needs. And of course their flocks furnished their main meat supply. Aside from all these useful considerations, the owner really was much attached to his sheep, even to the point of endangering his life for them. When one went astray, the owner felt the loss keenly. Besides, he knew that no animal was more helpless than a lost sheep. If he did not go and find it, it was a clear loss. His self-interest and his great sympathy for the lost sheep moved him to leave the ninety and nine, and go immediately in search of the lost sheep. And it is said that when a man found his lost sheep, he brought it back on his shoulder. He then rejoiced, and had his neighbors to rejoice with him.

### Joy in Heaven Over Penitent Sinners (Verse 7)

Jesus did not mean to teach by this parable that the majority of the people were not lost, nor even that some were not lost. He was taking the scribes and Pharisees at their own valuation, and showing them the folly of their criticism. These self-righteous Pharisees and scribes did not think they were sinners, and were therefore in no condition to repent. Jesus was showing them that there was more joy over one of these despised sinners who repented than over all the Pharisees and scribes that did not consider that they needed repentance. When Jesus and his disciples sat down to eat with publicans and sinners at the great feast prepared for him by Levi, "the Pharisees and their scribes murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with the publicans and sinners?" Jesus replied, "They that are in health have no need of a physician; but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." (Luke 5: 30-32.) Certainly he did not mean that these scribes and Pharisees were in moral and spiritual health, and therefore needed nothing; or that they were so righteous that they needed no repentance. He was merely taking them at their own valuation, and informed them, that so long as they felt about themselves as they did, he was not giving them any attention at all. A physician is wasting his time in prescribing a course of treatment for people who think they are in perfect health; but the good physician experiences joy, and brings joy to others, when he relieves suffering, and brings the sick back to health. To bring back the lost sheep of the house of Israel, Jesus had to go among them, just as the man with the lost sheep had to go after it. Of itself it would not return. And he rejoiced when he had brought it home. Saving sinners brought joy to Jesus, "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame." (Heb. 12: 2.) The joy that was set before Jesus was glory of redeemed men and women. A redeemed sinner brings joy to heaven. "I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no repentance." It seems that Jesus was here giving these self-righteous Pharisees and scribes to understand that there was no rejoicing in heaven over them.

### The Parable of the Lost Coin (Verses 8-10)

The numbers in the parables of this lesson have no special significance. They certainly do not mean that the greater portion of the human family are never lost; yet in the parables one sheep was lost and one piece of money was lost. "For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3: 23.) In these parables the emphasis is placed on that which was lost and on the diligence with which the lost was sought, and also on the joy over the finding of that which was lost.

The woman did not have much money. The marginal reading in the American Standard Version has this information: "Gr. *drachma*, a coin worth about eight pence, or sixteen cents." The total amount of her money was therefore about one dollar and sixty cents. Its purchasing power was, of course, much greater than the same amount today. The lost coin evidently meant much to this woman, for she would not rest till she found it. Perhaps the only source of light for her house was the door. She therefore had to light a candle to give her light as she diligently searched for the lost coin. Her joy was great when she found it. Likely she had let her friends and neighbors know about her loss, and they had been sympathizing with her in her loss. So when she found the lost coin, she called them in to rejoice with her. "Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." She sought diligently for the lost coin. Jesus was seeking to recover lost sinners. Instead of rejoicing that he was doing so, the Pharisees and scribes were murmuring against him for so doing. Their theory of keeping themselves separate from sinners had hardened them against sinners till they had no sympathy for sinners; and yet they themselves were about the worst of lost sinners, but were not aware of their lost condition. So long as they remained in that state of mind their condition was hopeless.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

There is this about the lost sinner: God knows where he is, but the sinner himself does not know. He has lost God.

It is easy to press a figure of speech too far. Parables do not mean all that some people try to make them mean. The parables of our lesson were not spoken to show that the sinner could not do anything about recovering himself from his lost condition. Of course, the lost sheep had nothing to do in bringing itself back home, nor did the lost coin have anything to do about recovering itself; but it is pressing the figures too far to argue that therefore the sinner can do nothing. We could just as easily argue, that since the lost coin knew nothing at all about anything, therefore the lost sinner knows nothing about anything. We could also as easily argue that no change was made in either the sheep or the coin. There was no change made in the character of either. There was no difference in either while lost and when restored. As that cannot be said of the sinner while lost and after restored, it is easy to see that a parable can be pressed too far.

Without God the sinner was helpless, and is yet so. He fell into sin—became lost, and could not of his own wisdom and strength recover himself. God through Christ provided a way of salvation, and by the Holy Spirit revealed this plan to the sinner. In providing

and revealing this plan the sinner could do nothing; but since it is provided and revealed, the next move is his. The fact that his sin brought him into condemnation shows that he must turn from his sins in order to be freed from that condemnation. As condemnation is conditional, so also must salvation be conditional. One cannot be unconditional and the other conditional. The more you think of this, the more apparent the truth of it becomes.

If people could fully realize the awful consequences of sin, they would be more diligent in seeking to save the lost sinner. But we see so much of the ordinary forms of sin, that we do not become excited about sin and its consequences. The consequences of sin are bad enough here in this life, and that is only a small portion of its consequences. But people have banished the possibility of hell from their thinking till they have little fear of the consequences of sin in the world to come; and that process of thinking has had a bad effect on the morals of the people. It is time we quit trying to theorize realities out of existence.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Jesus seeking the lost.  
The lost seeking Jesus.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
In studying saving the lost, what must we consider?  
Discuss the word hate as used in Luke 14: 26.  
What two courses are open to the sinner?  
Discuss Luke 14: 27-35.

#### Verses 1, 2

Who were the Pharisees?  
Who were the scribes?  
Who were the publicans?  
Whom did the Pharisees call sinners?  
What was their attitude toward these sinners?

#### Verses 3-6

Give the facts of the parable of the lost sheep.  
Why was a sheep so important then to the owner?

#### Verse 7

Why did Jesus go among sinners?  
Whom did Jesus come to call?  
Did he mean to imply that some were not sinners?  
Whom can Jesus benefit?

#### Verses 8-10

State the parable of the lost coin.  
Discuss the parable, and its lesson.  
Discuss the reflections.

### Lesson V—February 2, 1941

## THE INDIVIDUAL'S RESPONSIBILITY REGARDING BEVERAGE ALCOHOL

Hab. 2: 15; Gen. 4: 9-12; Mark 9: 42-48; 1 Thess. 5: 22

15 Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, to thee that addest thy venom, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!

9 And Jē-hō'vāh said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper?

10 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

11 And now cursed art thou from the ground, which hath opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

12 When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee its strength; a fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be in the earth.

42 And whosoever shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it were better for him if a great millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

43 And if thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than having thy two hands to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire.

45 And if thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life halt, rather than having thy two feet to be cast into hell.

47 And if thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out: it is good for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell;

48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

22 Abstain from every form of evil.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Abstain from every form of evil.” (1 Thess. 5: 22.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ezek. 3: 16-21.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|             |    |       |  |
|-------------|----|-------|--|
| January 27. | M. | ..... | Giving a Neighbor Drink (Hab. 2: 15-17)        |
| January 28. | T. | ..... | Every Man His Brother's Keeper (Gen. 4: 9-12)  |
| January 29. | W. | ..... | Causing Others to Stumble (Mark 9: 38-42)      |
| January 30. | T. | ..... | Abstaining from Every Evil (1 Thess. 5: 22-24) |
| January 31. | F. | ..... | Destroyed by Wine (Isa. 5: 8-13)               |
| February 1. | S. | ..... | When a Leader Staggeres (Isa. 28: 5-10)        |
| February 2. | S. | ..... | Warning the Wicked (Ezek. 3: 16-21)            |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—For Habakkuk 2: 15, about 605 B.C. For Genesis 4: 9-12: according to Usher, 3876 B.C.; according to Calmet, 3871 B.C.; according to Hales, 5210 B.C. There can be no certainty about the dates of these early events. For Mark 9: 42-48, probably A.D. 31; for 1 Thess. 5: 22, about A.D. 51.

*Places.*—The place where Habakkuk lived and prophesied is a matter of dispute. It is not possible for us to know where the Lord appeared to Cain. The speech of Mark 9: 42-48 was delivered at Capernaum. The first letter to the Thessalonians must have been written at Corinth.

*Persons.*—Jehovah, Jesus, his disciples, Habakkuk, Paul and Thessalonian brethren.

*Lesson Links.*—What should be done about alcoholic drinks is an age-old problem. Law and its proper enforcement may keep the temptation to drink from constantly confronting people on every turn, and thereby keep many from acquiring the habit of drinking; but no amount of legislation can keep people from hunting strong drink. People who desire and seek evil things can find them. The only real safeguard against fleshly indulgences is self-control. The motives for self-control are numerous; but the greatest source of self-control is a determination to do the will of God. Some people, however, who make no effort to serve God lead decent lives. They like to maintain their self-respect and to retain the respect of their neighbors; they know also that fleshly indulgences interfere with health and business. And many refrain from strong drink because they have no desire for that sort of thing.

After all is said, drinking or abstaining from drink is a personal matter. This does not mean that no one else is concerned as to

whether one drinks; it simply means that refraining from drink depends on the person himself. No man is compelled to drink intoxicants. Nothing but a complete reformation will help the person who delights in getting drunk.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### "Woe Unto" (Verse 15)

It is possible that Habakkuk wrote as early as 610 B.C. The contents of the book show that he wrote before the Chaldees invaded the land of Palestine. It was a time of great corruption among the Jews. The Lord would punish them by means of Nebuchadnezzar's army. Nebuchadnezzar was the Lord's battle-axe, with which he would cut down the Jewish nation. (Jer. 51: 20-24.) In a vision the Lord revealed to Habakkuk some things that were to come. To him Jehovah said, "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tablets, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for the appointed time, and it hasteth toward the end, and shall not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not delay." (2: 2, 3.) That is, the things foretold in the vision would not be long delayed. Hence, the rest of the book is history written before it occurred. Because of what Nebuchadnezzar and his army would do, woes are pronounced on him; that is, these things would befall him in the future. Hence, the vision deals with a nation, rather than with individuals.

On the verse of our lesson Scott comments as follows: "Probably the Chaldeans were very much addicted to drunkenness, and delighted in tempting each other, or strangers, to that vice; giving them liquor and pressing them to drink to excess of it, in order that they might overreach them when intoxicated, or discover and expose their infirmities and faults. For this, a woe was denounced against them, that they should be exposed to shame, instead of retaining their present honor and reputation; that they would be left to drink to excess, and expose themselves as uncircumcised idolaters; (which Belshazzar did at his feast); and that the Lord would put his cup of wrath into their hands, intoxicate them with his judgments, and leave them to defile their magnificence, according to the loathsome behavior and condition of drunken men."

As it is wrong for one nation to debauch another, it is certainly wrong for one person to cause another to be drunken. There is a woe pronounced on all such.

### Cain's Guilt and Punishment (Gen. 4: 9-12)

The Bible does not give us a full history of mankind. Very little of what occurred in the early centuries is recorded; hence, so far as we know Cain was the first corrupter of God's worship and also the first murderer. Cain, having confidence in his ability to direct his own way, offered worship according to his own notions; Abel, having confidence, or faith, in God, offered worship as God directed. God accepted Abel's worship, but rejected Cain's. Cain became angry with God, and took out his spite on Abel, and slew him; thus one sin led to another, and this led to Cain's lie that he did not know where his brother Abel was. Cain lacked self-control, and his anger became his master. Because of this he became a murderer—a fratricide.

Cain was conscious of his guilt; hence, the voice of God must have sounded to him like the voice of doom when God said to him, "Where is Abel thy brother?" He even thought he could deceive God, for he answered, "I know not." But it seems that even yet people frequently think they can deceive God. The one who thinks he can deceive God is himself deceived. No matter what we pretend to be or do, God knows our hearts. Too much has been made of Cain's question: "Am I my brother's keeper?" In an absolute sense no man is his brother's keeper, for no man can be entirely responsible for what his brother does. Yet no man can be entirely free from responsibility as to the conduct of his brother. The Christian must teach his brother when teaching is needed; also when needed he must reprove, rebuke, and exhort. By so doing the Christian can save himself, even if he fails to save his brother. The statement, "I am not my brother's keeper," contains both truth and error.

A Christian is certainly not fulfilling his obligations to his brother when he puts temptation before him. It is a man's duty to make the world as clean a place in which to live as far as he can do so. Because Cain slew his brother and then lied about it, God said to him, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." It was a cry for vengeance; yet God spared Cain's life, but condemned him to a sort of living death. "And now cursed art thou from the ground." Perhaps this means, the sequel seems so to indicate, that Cain was to be driven out from his native land into a strange land. He was to be a fugitive and a wanderer. When he tilled the land, it would not produce a full harvest; much of his labor would therefore be in vain. This sentence caused Cain to exclaim (verse 13), "My punishment is greater than I can bear." But he himself had given Abel more blows than he could bear. Many people today bring upon their bodies more than they are able to bear, and death results. When a man deliberately brings upon himself more than he can bear, he has no grounds for claiming sympathy. Many people indulge in drinking and other forms of debauchery more than their bodies can stand, and they die. It is nature's way of punishing a person and removing his corrupting example from among men.

### **The Sin of Causing Others to Stumble (Mark 9: 42)**

John had just said to Jesus, "Teacher, we saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followed not us." John thought this man should be in the group of personal followers of Jesus. John's commanding him to stop casting out demons in the name of Jesus might cause him to give up and quit; that would be causing him to stumble. No Christian should cause another to stumble, if he can righteously avoid doing so. "It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth." (Rom. 14: 21.) No one should feel that he has the liberty to do anything that would cause his brother to stumble. (1 Cor. 8: 9.) The punishment is severe for those who cause others to stumble. "And whosoever shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it were better for him if a great millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea." And there are so many ways in which our conduct may

be a hindrance to others, that we need to watch our steps. And we need to watch our own appetites and passions, lest they cause us to stumble.

### **Sacrifice Anything Rather Than Be Lost (Verses 43-48)**

Many early Christians gave up their lives to maintain their faithfulness. Stephen was stoned to death for his preaching. In becoming a Christian, and because he was a Christian, Paul suffered the loss of all things. (Phil. 3: 8.) He suffered much after he became a Christian. "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more; in labors more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." (2 Cor. 11: 23-27.) And he was finally beheaded because of his faithfulness to Christ. And thousands of others suffered as he did. So, it matters not how literally one applies the language of Christ in the verses of our lesson, it cannot bring greater sufferings than that which was endured by many of the early sons of God. Conditions made it necessary for them to endure such sufferings, or else forsake the Lord. As a person is sometimes required to give up his life for the Lord rather than to fall away from him, he certainly should not hesitate to give up anything of less importance. No doubt Jesus mentioned these extreme measures to show his disciples that they should give up anything that might hinder their living the Christian life. It is better to give up anything we have, rather than to be cast into hell; "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

Drunkenness is so useless that a man makes no sacrifice by refraining from it; in fact, he sacrifices about everything that is worth while when he becomes a drunkard. He brings punishment to himself and great sorrow to others. "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. 6: 9, 10.) Hence, the drunkard not only sacrifices many of the worth-while things of this life, but shuts up the kingdom of God against himself.

### **"Abstain from Every Form of Evil" (1 Thess. 5: 22)**

There are two kinds of evil, moral and physical, and drunkenness is both. Sickness and many other calamities that befall us are physical evils. All sorts of sin are moral evils. Drunkenness is a physical evil, because it works evil to the body; it is also a moral evil because it is wrong, a sin. For the sake of a man's body, he should, in so far as he can righteously do so, shun every form of physical evil. This would certainly include drunkenness. For the sake of his character and his soul's salvation, a man should shun every form of moral evil; this would certainly include drunkenness.

## SOME REFLECTIONS

A man has but one body. It is his instrument of service both to God and to man. He therefore owes it to God, to himself, and to mankind to keep that body in the best possible condition; to fail to take care of the body is a sin.

There are so many ways in which to be intemperate. Temperance means more than refraining from drunkenness; temperance is self-control, and self-control has to do with all our habits. Many are not temperate in eating; they exercise no control over their appetites, and thus shorten their days.

A fit of anger is poisonous to the body. It is folly for a person to say that he cannot control his temper; to be able to do so may require a decided effort, but it has often been done by continued and persistent effort. Certainly a man should be the master of his temper; if he is not the master, then he is the slave. A man who is a slave to any appetite or passion is a slave indeed.

No statistics can possibly reveal the amount of harm that drunkenness does. If no one was concerned but the one who does the drinking, it would be bad enough; but self-harm is only a small per cent of the evil done by drunkards. One wonders why any sensible man or woman will become a drunkard—why they have not more moral stamina.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The evils of drunkenness.  
How to diminish drunkenness.  
The Christian's duty in the matter.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Discuss what can be done about drunkenness.

#### Verse 15

Quote Hab. 2: 15.  
Who was about to invade Palestine?  
Why was the Lord allowing this invasion?  
Discuss this verse of our lesson.

#### Gen. 4: 9-12

Tell about Cain and Abel and their offerings.  
Why did Cain become angry, and what resulted?

Discuss the Lord's question and Cain's answer.  
To what extent is one responsible for another's conduct?  
Discuss any point in the incident that appeals to you.

#### Mark 9: 42

Quote verse 42.  
Discuss the events leading up to this verse.  
How do people cause others to stumble?

#### Verses 43-48

Describe the sacrifices and sufferings of many early Christians.  
What should a person be willing to give up in order to be saved?

#### 1 Thess. 5: 22

Discuss this verse.  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson VI—February 9, 1941

## THE CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD POSSESSIONS

Luke 16: 10-15, 19-23

10 He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much: and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much.

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?

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

14 And the Phāri-sees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things; and they scoffed at him.

15 And he said unto them, 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.

19 Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day:

20 And a certain beggar named Lāz'ā-rūs was laid at his gate, full of sores,

21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table; yea, even the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried.

23 And in Hā'dēs he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lāz'ā-rūs in his bosom.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” (Luke 16: 13.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 58: 6-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|             |    |       |   |
|-------------|----|-------|---|
| February 3. | M. | ..... | The Power to Get Wealth (Deut. 8: 11-18)      |
| February 4. | T. | ..... | Faithful with Little or Much (Luke 16: 10-13) |
| February 5. | W. | ..... | Lovers of Money Condemned (Luke 16: 14-17)    |
| February 6. | T. | ..... | The Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16: 19-23)     |
| February 7. | F. | ..... | The Love of Money (1 Tim. 6: 6-10)            |
| February 8. | S. | ..... | Beware of Covetousness (Luke 12: 13-15)       |
| February 9. | S. | ..... | The Ministry of Property (2 Cor. 9: 6-12)     |

## LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 31.

Place.—Some place in Perea.

Persons.—Jesus and his disciples. Some Pharisees were also present.

Lesson Links.—The student will get a much better grasp of the lesson, if he reads the entire chapter. The verses of our lesson are really an application of the lesson of the parable of the unrighteous steward. This steward seems to have been more than a master of the household affairs; he appears to have been a sort of general manager of his lord's affairs. This gave him opportunity to waste his master's means. The sequel shows that he was wasting his lord's means on himself. It was his duty to manage affairs in the interest of the one who had him employed. When his lord found that he was unfaithful, he was called on to give an account of his stewardship. He then proceeded, by wasting some more of his lord's means, to bring his lord's debtors under obligation to him, so that they would

take him into their homes after his lord dismissed him. "And his lord commended the unrighteous steward because he had done wisely." His lord, the man who had him employed, did not commend him for his dishonesty, but for his foresight, his shrewdness in looking out for his own interests. Wisdom is neither knowledge nor goodness; it is skill in the use of means to accomplish an end. And worldly people use more skill in accomplishing the ends they have in view than do the children of God. Children of God are frequently not very wise in their use of the means of salvation.

In connection with this parable Jesus gives this admonition: "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." The American Standard Version makes this verse much plainer than does the King James Version. We are admonished to use our means in such way as to make friends who will receive us into heaven. They do this in the person of Jesus, as told in Matthew 25: 34-36: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me." And so, by using the mammon of unrighteousness to help those who are in need, we make friends who will receive us into the eternal tabernacles. And there is no other way in which we can invest our funds that will bring such wonderful and lasting returns. The investment is safe; the returns are sure.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Character Tested by Small Matters (Verse 10)

No man with any care for his business would put an untried man in an important position; at least, that is the general rule. Usually an untried man is put in a place of low responsibility, and advanced as he proves himself worthy. If a man is not faithful in small matters, he certainly could not be trusted in a highly responsible position. If a man will not do right in small matters, he is not to be trusted in great matters. Yet many sons of God really think they would be generous in the use of their money, if they possessed great wealth, and yet they are not generous in the use of the small amount they have. Jesus states a general rule when he says, "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much: and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much." If a man is dishonest in the use of a few cents or dollars, it would be unreasonable to expect him to do right in the use of large amounts.

### How Own the True Riches? (Verses 11, 12)

Wealth is called "the unrighteous mammon" because it leads to so much unrighteousness. The love of money is the source of untold evil. An effort to gain wealth is often the cause of as much evil as is the possession of great wealth. "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. 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." (1 Tim. 6: 9, 10.) Hence, the striving for wealth may destroy one's soul; and the way we use what we have tells much about our character.

"If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" The question is really an affirmation that God will not commit the true riches to the one who does not faithfully use the unrighteous mammon. No earthly possessions can be regarded as true riches, for they are deceitful and unenduring. The true riches are the spiritual blessings, culminating in heaven. Heaven and its glories are certainly true riches, for such riches will not be taken from us nor will we be taken from them. "If ye have not been faithful in that which is another's." The things we have in our keeping here really belong to God. We are stewards over that which God has committed to our trust. The deed you hold to a tract of land does not secure it to you for all eternity; it merely protects your stewardship over that certain piece of property; it is the Lord's land. "The earth is Jehovah's, and the fulness thereof." (Psalm 24: 1.) For a limited time he has given us charge of certain portions of that which belongs to him. And if we have not been faithful in that which belongs to Jehovah, he will not give us permanent possession of a home in glory. "If ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?" If we are faithful children of God, we shall fall heir to an eternal inheritance; that inheritance will be our own. "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him." (Rom. 8: 17.) "Whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that from the Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance: ye serve the Lord Christ." (Col. 3: 23, 24.) Remember that you are a steward of God, and that it is required of a steward that he be found faithful. (1 Cor. 4: 1, 2.)

### **"Ye Cannot Serve God and Mammon" (Verse 13)**

This is a general truth. It should be plain to anyone that no man can serve two masters when they are in opposition to each other. A man cannot love God and the world at the same time. If a man tries to serve two masters, he will inevitably become more attached to one of them. The truth expressed in this verse is of wide application. A timeserver cannot be a servant of God. Paul said, "For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? or am I striving to please men? if I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ." (Gal. 1: 10.) "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2: 15.)

### **The Pharisees Scoffed at Jesus (Verses 14, 15)**

The Pharisees had a contempt for what Jesus had said. Their minds were so warped by their love of money that the teaching of Jesus concerning money sounded to them like the veriest foolishness. They, of course, thought he had no financial sense at all. They judged as men of the world; they wanted to stand well in the eyes of men. "And he said unto them, Ye are they that justify yourselves

in the sight of men." To make a success of life, as men count success, was their ambition. It was not that they wanted to justify themselves by argument, but they did not want men to condemn them for their lack of financial ability. And outwardly they were very religious, but their religion was a mere pretense. Such conduct is vain and foolish, for God knows the heart.

### The Rich Man and Lazarus (Verses 19-23)

There has been a lot of discussion over the story of the rich man and Lazarus, as to whether it is a "parable or history." It seems not to have occurred to some, that it could be both. They forget that in many parables historic facts are told to illustrate some spiritual truth. In the parables of Jesus earthly things are used with which to set forth some spiritual truth. A parable is an extended illustration. To be an illustration the hearers had to be familiar with the facts told. Hence, the story of the rich man and Lazarus does not fit the requirements of a parable in any particular. If it is called a parable, then what truth is taught? What is represented? Does the rich man represent the Jews? then all Jews are doomed, for he was lost. Does the poor man represent the Gentiles? then all Gentiles will be saved, for Lazarus was saved. And what or who would the dogs and the five brethren at home represent? Besides, Jesus would not take happenings in the next world, things with which the disciples were not at all familiar, to illustrate things occurring in this world. But if it is a parable, the facts are the same. "There was a certain rich man"—"there was a certain poor man." To say that no such man ever lived is to make a serious charge against the Lord; for either there were such men, or there were not.

*The Rich Man.*—"A certain rich man"—perhaps well-known, or Jesus would have mentioned his name. He is not charged with being a miser. In fact, he was not, for he spent his money lavishly for the finest of clothing and the best of food. He must have entertained his friends and gone out in company, else why the sumptuous meals and fine clothing? No man who shuns his neighbors spends his money freely for such things. It is not charged against this man that he was a drunkard or an immoral wretch. Such a man would be considered one of the leading citizens of his community. The trouble was, he was a steward of God and was wasting his Lord's means on himself—providing for his own comfort regardless of the needs of others. But riches do not purchase immunity from death nor buy entrance into the land of bliss. The rich man died, and was buried.

*The Poor Man Lazarus.*—How came Lazarus to be so poor we do not know. Not only was he poor, but he was afflicted with sores. Perhaps ill-health had reduced him to such a state of poverty. He was a beggar. Some men, who perhaps could not furnish him food, carried him in pity to the rich man's gate. Where food was served so lavishly, as was done in the home of the rich man, many fragments of food would be left on the table; these the servants would feed to the dogs. The rich man, having eaten to fullness, would be willing for Lazarus to share with the dogs that which was left over. There is no reason in declaring that he was denied his portion of the left-over fragments. The language indicates that he was carried regularly to the gate of the rich man. Certainly this would not have been

done, if he failed to get anything to eat. There is no need that we make the rich man out worse than he was. It would have been greatly to his credit had he seen after Lazarus' needs; for that which he had in his keeping was not really his own, and he would soon be compelled to leave it all behind. He should have used God's property to relieve the sufferings of God's people.

*Their Reward.*—The term "Abraham's bosom" is not so much a figurative expression as it is a name which the Jews gave to the place of bliss. To that place Lazarus was carried by angels. He had suffered here, but what a glorious departure from the sufferings of this life. A beggar here, but attended by angels to his eternal inheritance. We can well imagine that the rich man was followed to his place of burial by a throng of the "leading citizens" of the community, but they could go no farther with him. How different was his going and his reward from that of Lazarus! "And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." There is a place of torment for those who do not live as they should, just as there is a place of bliss for those who live righteously. There comes a time when the righteous judgment of God will be revealed; "who will render to every man according to his works." (Read Romans 2: 4-10.)

### SOME REFLECTIONS

The story of the rich man and Lazarus is not complete unless we study the remaining part of the chapter.

The rich man called for Abraham to send Lazarus, "that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame." How poor he had become! The rich had become the beggar, and the beggar had become rich. He was informed that a great fixed gulf separated them, and that there could be no crossing it. The rich man's next plea: "I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." This reveals why he was there—he had not heeded testimony. Notice that he does not say, "Lest God send them," but, "Lest they also come." God does not send people to torment—they go. "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." This is saying that if they would heed Moses and the prophets, they would not go to that place of torment. He thought they would listen to one who returned from the dead, but Abraham affirmed otherwise. Jesus did come back from the dead, and gave the Great Commission; will you hear him?

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

- The parable of the unrighteous steward.
- The destiny of the righteous.
- The destiny of the unrighteous.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

Give an outline of the parable of the unrighteous steward.

What is the difference between knowledge and wisdom?

What is our duty as stewards of God?

## Verse 10

Repeat and discuss this verse.

## Verses 11, 12

Why is wealth called the mammon of unrighteousness?

Read and discuss 1 Tim. 6: 9, 10.

What are the true riches, and what is our own? and why our own?

## Verse 13

Repeat, and discuss this verse.

## Verses 14, 15

Why did the Pharisees scoff at Jesus?

By what standard did they judge Jesus?  
How did they seek to justify themselves?  
Why was their effort in that respect of no value?

## Verses 19-23

Was the story of the rich man and Lazarus a parable? Give reasons for answer.

Discuss what is said about the rich man; also what is said of Lazarus. Discuss the destiny of each.

Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson VII—February 16, 1941

## JESUS TEACHES FORGIVENESS AND GRATITUDE

Luke 17: 1-4, 11-19

1 And he said unto his disciples, It is impossible but that occasions of stumbling should come; but woe unto him, through whom they come!

2 It were well for him if a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, rather than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble.

3 Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

4 And if he sin against thee seven times in the day, and seven times turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

11 And it came to pass, as they were on the way to Jê-ru'sâ-lêm, that he was passing along the borders of Sâ-mâ'ri-â and Gâl'i-lêe.

12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off:

13 And they lifted up their voices, saying, Jê'sûs, Master, have mercy on us.

14 And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go and show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, as they went, they were cleansed.

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, with a loud voice glorifying God;

16 And he fell upon his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Sâ-mâr'i-tân.

17 And Jê'sûs answering said, Were not the ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

18 Were there none found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger?

19 And he said unto him, Arise, and go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you."* (Eph. 4: 32.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 100.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|              |    |   |
|--------------|----|---|
| February 10. | M. | Jesus Teaches Forgiveness (Luke 17: 1-4)            |
| February 11. | T. | A Problem Concerning Forgiveness (Matt. 18: 21, 22) |
| February 12. | W. | "Father, Forgive Them!" (Luke 23: 33-38)            |
| February 13. | T. | Jesus Teaches Gratitude (Luke 17: 11-19)            |
| February 14. | F. | Thanking God Always (Eph. 5: 18-21)                 |
| February 15. | S. | "I Thank Thee, O Father" (Matt. 11: 25-27)          |
| February 16. | S. | Song of a Grateful Heart (Psalm 117: 1, 2)          |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 31.

*Places.*—The borders of Samaria and Galilee and apparently some place in Perea.

*Persons.*—Jesus, his disciples, and ten lepers.

*Lesson Links.*—In studying forgiveness we need to have in mind some of the fundamental principles on which God deals with man. He certainly would not have us to try the impossible. When is it possible to forgive sins? What is forgiveness? To forgive sin is to remit sin, to blot out the charge that is against the sinner, to reward the person as free from all guilt. "Sin is lawlessness." (1 John 3: 4.) But how can God consider a lawless person as not lawless? Disobedience must be removed before God can consider a person as not disobedient. As a lack of conformity with the law of God is sin, and brings one into condemnation, so obedience must take the place of disobedience before a person can be free from the sin of disobedience. This change from disobedience to obedience is the result of faith in God and his Christ, and repentance, or a change of mind respecting God and his law. God cannot forgive a sin so long as the man cherishes that sin in his heart. A man cannot be counted as not guilty so long as he is guilty at heart. Hence, repentance is essential to forgiveness; the nature of the case demands it, and God requires it. He does not—he cannot—forgive without repentance on the part of the guilty, for repentance is the process of putting sin out of the heart. And because God desires that all men be reconciled to him, he commands all men everywhere to repent.

Gratitude is thankfulness, or appreciation for benefits received. If there were no needs, there would be no benefits, and therefore no gratitude; but human needs are manifold. Our friends and neighbors can supply some of our needs, but only the God of heaven and earth can supply some of them.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Occasions of Stumbling (Verses 1, 2)

If Christians were as strong and watchful as they should be, fewer of them would stumble; but many Christians are so weak and careless, and there are so many pitfalls, that many stumble. One occasion of stumbling is false teaching. It has always been so. "For they that lead this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed." (Isa. 9: 16.) "Behold, I am against them that prophesy lying dreams, saith Jehovah, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their vain boasting." (Jer. 23: 32.) "And many false prophets shall arise, and shall lead many astray." (Matt. 24: 11.) "But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their lascivious doings." (2 Pet. 2: 1, 2.) "Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." (Col. 2: 8.) "Let no man deceive you with empty words." (Eph. 5: 6.) And persecution causes many to stumble. In the parable of the

sower the one representing the seed sown on rocky ground "endureth for a while; and when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway he stumbleth." (Matt. 13: 21.) And some fall into all sorts of immoral practices; and some people allure whom they can into such practices. So offenses, or occasions of stumbling, come in many ways; "but woe unto him, through whom they come!" The saddest part of it is that this condemnation rests upon many otherwise good people, for they cause many to stumble by sinful divisions in churches. The doom of all such will be terrible. "It were well for him if a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, rather than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble." In Matt. 18: 6 we read: "Whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea." This refers to weak, undeveloped children of God, babes in Christ, and not to real babes. The Christian should help the weak instead of putting stumbling blocks in their way.

**"Take Heed to Yourselves: . . . Rebuke, . . . Forgive"**  
(Verses 3, 4)

"Take heed to yourselves." This is the Christian's first obligation. He must take stock of his knowledge; he must eliminate error, and gain correct knowledge of the will of the Lord. He cannot live right unless he has right knowledge. He must study to show himself approved unto God. He must have correct knowledge so that he may guide others aright. He must look into his motives to see that no worldly ambitions move him. He must carefully guard his actions and habits, for the sake of his own character and for the sake of those whom he might influence. Paul gave Timothy this charge: "Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. 4: 16.) To the elders of the church at Ephesus Paul gave this charge: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20: 28.) In taking heed to ourselves we must not forget our obligations to others.

"If thy brother sin, rebuke him." Do not encourage him in his sin; neither say nor do anything that will tend to give him ease of conscience. Rebuke him. "Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching." (2 Tim. 4: 2.) "If he repent, forgive him." This shows that Jesus was speaking of a sin against a brother. A man can forgive a personal injury or insult, but he has nothing to do with forgiving a sin against God. But it is hard for an injured person to rebuke the offender in the right spirit; it is hard to eliminate personal feelings. Unless a person can do so, he is likely to make things worse. Be careful, lest in rebuking an offender you sin against him. Make your rebuke in a spirit that is calculated to reclaim him from his error; it is not a time to seek to vindicate yourself, nor to avenge yourself. A brother's salvation is endangered; do your best to save him.

"If he repent, forgive him." In the very nature of the case there can be no forgiveness without repentance. God does not require

us to attempt the impossible; hence, he requires us to forgive the offender, "if he repent." But many times offense is taken when none was intended. People do so many unthoughtful things, it is well that we take no notice of many things that do not seem to be exactly right. Very likely the other party meant no offense; but when actions or words are of such a nature that we cannot ignore them, we are to seek to bring the offending party to repentance. God does not forgive the impenitent, but he seeks to bring the person to repentance, that he may forgive him. And this should always be our attitude toward those who sin against us.

It has been said that if you do not forget, you do not forgive; but it is impossible to banish things from our memories at will. However, if we remember a thing *against* a person, we have not forgiven. How would the disciple know how many times he had forgiven a person if he had no recollection concerning any former wrong and forgiveness? "If he sin against thee seven times in the day, and seven times turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him." There is no lack of harmony between what is here said and what is said in Matthew 18: 21, 22. Here Jesus tells what should be done in one day, if necessary; but in Matthew there is no limitation as to time. "Then came Peter and said to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven." It all means, if the occasion demands it, the process must go on indefinitely. One would hardly be expected to keep a correct account of so many offenses. Hence, we must forgive as often as the offender comes and says, "I repent."

### Jesus on the Way to Jerusalem (Verse 11)

Unless Luke mentions this incident out of its chronological order, Jesus was on his last journey to Jerusalem. The Common Version says that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee, but he could not have passed through them in that order in going to Jerusalem. Besides, in his last journey to Jerusalem he passed down through Perea, on the east side of the Jordan. (Matt. 19: 1; Luke 18: 35.) As he drew nigh unto Jericho on his way to Jerusalem, it is evident that he approached it from the east. He had therefore crossed the Jordan east of Jericho. It is evident therefore that he did not pass through the midst of Samaria on this last journey to Jerusalem, but merely passed along the borders of Samaria and Galilee, as the American Standard Version has it.

### Jesus Encounters Ten Lepers (Verses 12, 13)

He encountered ten lepers as he entered into a certain village. These lepers did not come near him. The law of Moses required that lepers be separated from the people. (Lev. 13: 45, 46; Num. 5: 1-4.) Hence, these lepers were not in the village, but at the entrance to the village. They "stood afar off" from Jesus, but they knew something of Jesus and his powers; in fact, they knew who he was. "And they lifted up their voices, saying, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." We can well imagine the anxiety they put into that plea. They were afflicted with a deadly malady, and were shut off from association with their friends and families. Nothing but isola-

tion, suffering, and a horrible death was in prospect for them, till Jesus came along. They knew that Jesus could heal them, if he would, and they had hopes that he would do so. Hence, their plea for mercy.

### The Lepers Healed (Verse 14)

In answer to the plea of the lepers Jesus simply said, "Go and show yourselves unto the priests." So far as the record shows, he made them no promise. He issued a command which they could easily understand; but they had confidence in Jesus, and knew he had a purpose in sending them to the priests. Under the law of Moses the priests had to decide on all cases of leprosy and on all supposed cases. His judgment as to what to do was final. (Lev. 13: 46; Deut. 24: 8.) Apparently these lepers had not gone far in carrying out the order of Jesus before they were healed. "As they went, they were cleansed." It was not a gradual healing, but an instantaneous healing. One moment they were lepers; the next moment they were entirely free from that awful malady.

### Only One Returned to Thank His Benefactor (Verses 15-19)

They all started out under the command to go and show themselves to the priests. When they were healed it seems that nine thought of nothing but to show themselves to the priests, and be pronounced free from leprosy. The one who returned was a Samaritan. It is not likely that the priests would have had anything to do with him, but in his joy he could have hastened to his own supposed priests in Samaria. But he felt so grateful to his Benefactor that he hastened to return, and give thanks. "And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, with a loud voice glorifying God; and he fell upon his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan." The others were, of course, Jews. Likely the nine thought more about having themselves pronounced free from leprosy than they did about giving thanks for their healing. They were too selfish to feel gratitude—only the Samaritan, the stranger, or alien, returned to give glory to God. "Arise, and go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole." It is significant that Jesus did not now tell him to go, and show himself to the priests. But he did that which is so hard for some to do; he expressed joyously his appreciation for what Jesus had done.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

As it is a Christian's duty to forgive a trespass against him, it becomes the solemn duty of the offender to make it possible, even easy, for the brother to forgive him.

If everything moved along smoothly, it is likely that we would not know just how strong our faith is. For our own good it is necessary that we be occasionally put through a severe test. The stumbling block is often there; are you able to shove it out of the way, or pass over it, without stumbling? "For there must be also factions among you, that they that are approved may be made manifest among you." (1 Cor. 11: 19.)

Gratitude is not a Bible word; but it means thankfulness, and that is a Bible word. In etymology think and thank are closely related; they are also closely related in action. The person who thinks of the source of any benefit, or blessing, can hardly refrain from being

thankful. If he thinks of benefits, he thanks the benefactor. "Count your many blessings." Think on the mercy and the goodness of God. David would meditate on God's precepts, on his statutes, on his wondrous works, and on his word. (Psalm 119.) No exercise is more calculated to promote godliness than meditating on God and his word. But people are in such a rush that few people take time to meditate. "Take time to be holy."

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Occasions for stumbling.

In sinning against a brother we also sin against God.

The duties of the offended and the offender.

Who were the Samaritans?

The profits of meditation.

## QUESTIONS

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

### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
When is it possible to forgive sins?  
Give reason for your answer.  
What is gratitude?

### Verses 1, 2

Give substance of verses one and two.  
Name and discuss some of the things that cause Christians to stumble.  
What is said of him through whom stumbling comes?  
What should be the Christian's attitude toward the weak?

### Verses 3, 4

Give the substance of these verses.  
Why must Christians take heed to themselves?  
Give the scripture teaching on this point.  
"If thy brother sin," what?  
"If he repent," what?  
What trespasses and sins can we forgive?  
In what spirit must we rebuke?

What about forgetting and forgiving?  
How often shall we forgive?

### Verse 11

Tell what road the Galilean Jews usually followed in going to Jerusalem.  
Why did they not go a nearer way?

### Verses 12, 13

What did the law of Moses require concerning lepers?  
Why would the ten lepers call on Jesus for mercy?

### Verse 14

What did Jesus tell them to do?  
What happened to them and when?

### Verses 15-19

What did they all do?  
Why the difference in the actions of the nine and the one?  
What sort of person is usually grateful?  
Why is thinking necessary to gratitude?  
What are the advantages of meditation?  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson VIII—February 23, 1941

## JESUS CALLS TO PRAYER

Luke 18: 1-14

1 And he spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint;

2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, who feared not God, and regarded not man;

3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came oft unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

4 And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;

5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest she wear me out by her continual coming.

- 6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge saith.  
 7 And shall not God avenge his elect, that cry to him day and night, and yet he is longsuffering over them?  
 8 I say unto you, that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?  
 9 And he spake also this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and set all others at nought:  
 10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Phār'i-sēe, and the other a publican.  
 11 The Phār'i-sēe stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.  
 12 I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get.  
 13 But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God, be thou merciful to me a sinner.  
 14 I say unto you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*Lord, teach us to pray.*” (Luke 11: 1.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 67: 1-7.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|              |    |       |   |
|--------------|----|-------|---|
| February 17. | M. | ..... | The Unjust Judge (Luke 18: 1-8)               |
| February 18. | T. | ..... | The Pharisee and the Publican (Luke 18: 9-14) |
| February 19. | W. | ..... | Perseverance in Prayer (Mark 7: 24-30)        |
| February 20. | T. | ..... | Humility in Prayer (Matt. 8: 5-13)            |
| February 21. | F. | ..... | The Prayer of Faith (Mark 9: 20-27)           |
| February 22. | S. | ..... | A House of Prayer (Matt. 21: 12-16)           |
| February 23. | S. | ..... | Taught to Pray (Luke 11: 1-4)                 |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 31.

*Place.*—Some place in Galilee or Perea.

*Persons.*—Jesus, his disciples, and “certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous.” These were evidently Pharisees.

*Lesson Links.*—A sense of obligation and a feeling of dependence are essential elements in the Christian character. It takes both to give balance to the Christian character. “The neglect of either is hurtful. Obligation binds us to the discharge of certain duties; but a faithful discharge of duties has a tendency to create a feeling of self-satisfaction, and to eliminate the feeling of dependence. On the other hand, the feeling of dependence has a tendency to destroy the sense of obligation. A child that is petted and waited on by all the other members of the family soon reaches the point where it does not feel any obligation to the rest of the family. There have been Christians, real and professed, who spent so much time in prayer, praise, and holy meditation that they lost sight of the practical duties of life. They spent their time gazing into heaven, and had no time to look about them on the fields white unto harvest. The well-rounded, forceful Christian life is made up of a proper blending of a sense of obligation and a feeling of need.”—Sound Doctrine.

If a person did not have a feeling of need, he could not sincerely pray; and if a man had no sense of obligation, he would not render any service to God or man. Hence, prayer grows out of a sense of need.

Many theories of a rationalistic nature that hinder prayer have sprung up in these modern times. Early Christians were not both-

ered with such theories; they prayed, and believed that God was able to answer their prayers, and that he was willing to do so. It is strange that professed believers in the power, wisdom, and goodness of God will put their reasoning up against the plain teaching of the word of God, and declare that God cannot answer prayer without working a miracle. Man, birds, and beasts can answer the call of their dependents without working a miracle; why espouse a theory that makes God more helpless than the least of his creatures? Paul declares that God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." (Eph. 3: 20.)

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### A Parable Stated—Its Purpose and Characters (Verses 1-3)

This lesson is closely connected with the latter part of the preceding chapter. He had been giving them some warnings about the calamities that were coming upon the Jewish nation. He informed them that the eagles, the Romans, would soon be gathering around the fast decaying body, the Jewish nation. Even then the children of God must not give up. "The commencement of this chapter is plainly connected in subject with the close of the preceding. For an attention to the duties of prayer, patience, and perseverance would be their best support in the hour of tribulation and distress, under the evils which would precede the destruction of Jerusalem."—Bloomfield. Under such tribulations as were coming, they should be so fortified against weakness, that they would not faint; that is, that they would not lose courage and quit.

*The Judge.*—When a man has no reverence for God and no regard for his fellow man, he is devoid of all commendable traits. He does not take God into account in anything that he does; and the only use he has for people is to so manipulate matters that he can make them serve his interests. He uses people for his own profit; if he cannot so use them, he cares nothing for them. It is a pity that men of that character are ever put into positions where other people must depend on anything they do. Such men will pat you on the shoulder so long as they can use you; they will seek to destroy whom they cannot use. This judge was thoroughly selfish; he was moved by no good motive.

*The Widow.*—This woman was not a woman of great influence; had she been, these greedy oppressors would not have been seeking to rob her of what she had. Her own resistance was accomplishing nothing. As a last resort she came to this unjust judge, this judge who regarded neither God nor man. Likely she knew he was thoroughly selfish, but she had to do something, and she came to him as a last resort. And the sequel shows that she had her mind made up as to what she would have to do to gain a hearing. She did not aim to be denied. She wanted justice, to be freed of her adversaries. Instead of the plea, "Avenge me of mine adversary" the marginal reading has, "Do me justice of mine adversary." Perhaps the marginal reading gives us the correct meaning of *avenge*. What she wanted was justice—freedom from oppression.

## Why the Unjust Judge Gave Heed to the Widow's Plea (Verses 4, 5)

The judge cared nothing for the widow and her troubles; so far as he cared, her oppressors might have all she had. "Though I fear not God, nor regard man." He prided himself on being a hard man, but he did care for himself. This woman was giving him trouble. If he pleaded that he did not have time to hear her, she would just calmly wait and later renew her request. She was wearing him out—bruising him. She was coming to him continually—she knew that he was a hard man; but she intended to wear down his resistance, and she succeeded. To save himself from this continuous worry, he granted her the justice she so much desired.

## Shall Not God Avenge His Elect? (Verses 6-8)

If the unrighteous judge, "who feared not God, and regarded not man," could be induced by continual pleading to avenge the widow of her adversaries, "shall not God avenge his elect, that cry to him day and night?" The purpose therefore of this parable is to encourage the people of God to be persistent in their prayers. To pray persistently is not a violation of Matthew 6: 7. To pray often for the same thing, if the prayer is sincere, is not to be guilty of vain repetition. Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane prayed the same prayer three times in rapid succession. This parable encourages a similar effort on our part. If God does not hear us at once, it is not because he is indifferent to our cries. He may be testing our faith, or allowing our feeling of need to draw us nearer to him. At the proper time he will avenge his elect, and that speedily. God is long-suffering over his children, and their persistent and continual praying does not wear him out.

Jesus closes his comments on this parable with this question: "Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Perhaps we are too ready to take this as a detached statement; but it surely is closely connected with the speech Jesus was making, which began with the twentieth verse of the preceding chapter. In that speech Jesus was warning them of the tribulations that would accompany the destruction of the Jewish nation. The disciples were encouraged to persistent prayer that they might not faint when these tribulations should come. In view of these facts, it seems that the coming of the Son of man here mentioned referred to his coming in judgment on the land of the Jews. The word here translated earth sometimes refers to the land of the Jews. In the destruction of Jerusalem would he find faith in the land of the Jews? At that time the disciples would not expect him to find faith anywhere else.

## A Parable—Its Purpose (Verse 9)

As stated by Luke, Jesus had a definite purpose in speaking this parable; it was a rebuke to the proud and haughty Pharisees. It is supposed that the sect of the Pharisees originated with a group who earnestly desired to maintain purity of life and of teaching; but they had degenerated to the point where they regarded themselves as the most righteous people among the Jews. Outwardly they kept up their tradition. They used their religion as a cloak, an outward dress; but inwardly they were full of corruption. Read the charges Jesus made against them in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew. After

pronouncing numerous woes upon them for pretending to be righteous while full of all sorts of sins and corruptions, he pronounces this judgment upon them: "Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?" The man who begins to take pride in his own righteousness and thinks he is better than others is slipping into the class of the Pharisees.

### Two Men Pray in the Temple (Verses 10-13)

Two men—a Pharisee and a publican, the two extremes in Jewish social and religious life. Pharisees held the publicans in the greatest contempt, and would have nothing to do with them either socially or religiously. They regarded themselves as the special favorites of God and the publicans as under his severest condemnation. Hence, this Pharisee would think it utterly useless for the publican to pray. But both went up into the temple to pray.

*The Pharisee's Prayer.*—In reality he did not pray; he told the Lord about his own perfection of character. For one thing he was thankful, namely, that he was not like other men, "or even as this publican." He was expressing his true sentiments and his estimate of himself. He felt that he was a superior sort of person. He was speaking what he thought was the truth, for men do not knowingly lie to God. It is true that Ananias lied to God, but he thought he was lying only to Peter. We have no reason to doubt that he fasted twice a week and gave tithes of all that came into his hands. He did not feel that he was guilty of any sins, and so he confessed none; and of course asked for no forgiveness. He made no plea for mercy; he was depending on his own merit. He did not ask God for anything. His prayer was nothing but praise of himself. It is significant that Jesus said, "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself."

*The Publican's Prayer.*—We of today might learn a lesson from the publican's prayer. Notice its brevity, and yet its fullness. Likely as the Pharisee talked to the Lord about himself, the publican felt that the Pharisee had much the advantage of him. He had no merit of his own to plead before the Lord. Doubtless he felt humiliated and ashamed before the Pharisee. Hence, when he was ready to pray, he would not so much as lift up his eyes toward heaven, "but smote his breast, saying, God, be thou merciful to me a sinner." He did not try to make a fancy speech to the Lord—he prayed. He knew what he most needed—mercy. And if God granted that to him in full, what else did he need? In their prayers, children of God should leave off all flowery speech, all efforts to make an impression on the people, and make their petitions brief and to the point.

### The Publican Justified Rather Than the Pharisee (Verse 14)

In the eyes of the whole Jewish nation the Pharisee would have been regarded as the one whom the Lord would hear. He was in good standing among his fellow men. He appeared to be a clean man morally, and he kept the forms of the law of Moses and the tradition of the elders. Yet the Lord did not hear him. "Him that hath a high look and a proud heart will I not suffer." (Psalm 101: 5.) "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to Jehovah." (Prov. 16: 5.) Also verse 18: "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." The Pharisee was both proud and

haughty. "Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled." But the publican was humble and of a contrite spirit. "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." (Psalm 51: 17.) "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.) "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite." (Isa. 57: 15.) Because the publican was of this class the Lord heard him. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Prayer is more than desire. We pray for that which we desire. Paul's language in Romans 10: 1 shows this distinction.

It is right to pray for things we actually need, but too often prayers are for luxuries and for things to gratify our pride. "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and covet, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war; ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures." (James 4: 2, 3.)

One who clings to his sins or is rebellious of spirit need not pray. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear." (Psalm 66: 18.) "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination." (Prov. 28: 9.) No one can sincerely pray for the Lord's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, unless he is willing for it to be done in his own heart and life.

A careful study of the prayers recorded in the Bible will be a great help to those who want to pray as they should. The prayers are short. Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple is the longest, but that was a great state occasion. Note carefully the prayer of Jabez, as recorded in 1 Chron. 4: 10. See how comprehensive it is, and yet how brief.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The model Jesus gave. (Matt. 6: 9-13.)

The instructions Jesus gave concerning prayer. (Matt. 6: 5-8.)

What God is able to do. (Eph. 3: 20, 21.)

The prayer of Jabez. (1 Chron. 4: 10.)

### QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
Discuss a sense of obligation and a feeling of need, as they relate to Christian character.

Name some hindrances to prayer.

#### Verses 1-3

With what is this lesson closely connected?  
Why would they have special need for strength?

Describe the judge.  
What was the widow's plea?

#### Verses 4, 5

What did the judge say of himself?  
Why would he grant the widow's request?

#### Verses 6-8

What is the main lesson of the parable?  
Why may God sometimes not answer prayer at once?  
What is the significance of the closing remarks of Jesus on this parable?

## Verse 9

Why did Jesus speak this parable, and to whom did he refer?

Give the leading characteristics of the Pharisees.

Name some of the charges Jesus made against them in Matthew 23.

How may we become like the Pharisees?

## Verses 10-13

Describe the Pharisee's prayer.

What was wrong with his prayer? Repeat the publican's prayer.

## Verse 14

What would the religionists of that day have thought of these two men?

Why was the Pharisee not justified?

Whom will the Lord not hear?

Whom will he hear?

Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson IX—March 2, 1941

## THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST

Luke 19: 41 to 20: 8

41 And when he drew nigh, he saw the city and wept over it.

42 Saying, If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

43 For the days shall come upon thee, when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side.

44 And shall dash thee to the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

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.

47 And he was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people sought to destroy him:

48 And they could not find what they might do; for the people all hung upon him, listening.

1 And it came to pass, on one of the days, as he was teaching the people in the temple, and preaching the gospel, there came upon him the chief priests and the scribes with the elders;

2 And they spake, saying unto him, Tell us: By what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority?

3 And he answered and said unto them, I also will ask you a question; and tell me:

4 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or from men?

5 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why did ye not believe him?

6 But if we shall say, From men; all the people will stone us: for they are persuaded that John was a prophet.

7 And they answered, that they knew not whence it was.

8 And Jē'sūs said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6: 46.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 7: 21-29.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|              |    |   |
|--------------|----|---|
| February 24. | M. | Christ Acclaimed as King (Luke 19: 37-40)     |
| February 25. | T. | Christ Weeping Over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44) |
| February 26. | W. | Christ Cleansing the Temple (Luke 19: 45-48)  |
| February 27. | T. | Christ's Authority Questioned (Luke 20: 1-8)  |
| February 28. | F. | Christ's Pre-eminence (Phil. 2: 9-11)         |
| March 1.     | S. | The Eternal Ruler (Isa. 9: 6, 7)              |
| March 2.     | S. | Christ Shall Have Dominion (Psalm 72: 1-8)    |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 31; the week of his crucifixion.

*Place.*—Jerusalem.

*Persons.*—Jesus, the traders in the temple, the people, and the scribes and chief priests.

*Lesson Links.*—Our last lesson was spoken by Jesus as he neared the Jordan on his way to Jerusalem, or else after he crossed into Perea. He did much teaching as he journeyed along through Perea. On this journey he met the rich young ruler, who asked him what to do to inherit eternal life. Jesus replied, "If thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments." The young man had kept these commandments. Then Jesus said to him, "If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me." Jesus loved that young man, and wanted him as a member of his personal followers; but he did not stand the test—he went away sorrowful. Then Jesus delivered a discourse on riches and the kingdom. (Matt. 19: 16-30; Mark 10: 17-31; Luke 18: 18-30.) After delivering other discourses along the way, he recrossed the Jordan and passed through Jericho, where he gave sight to blind Bartimeus and dined with Zaccheus, the publican. He then journeyed on toward Jerusalem. It seems that he spent the Sabbath in Bethany, and made what is usually called his Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem on the first day of the week. Such wonderful demonstrations on the part of the people discouraged the Pharisees, who very much desired to put him to death. "The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Behold how ye prevail nothing; lo, the world is gone after him." (John 12: 19.)

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

## Jesus Weeps Over Jerusalem (Verses 41-44)

Jesus loved his nation; he loved Jerusalem. He could see vividly the destruction and misery that the invading Roman armies would bring upon the city and the nation, and he wept; "for then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be." (Matt. 24: 21.) And yet by their conduct the people were bringing all these tribulations upon themselves, and were doing it ignorantly and blindly. Had they known the things that belonged to peace, they could have averted such calamities and sufferings. They had persistently refused all warnings that did not harmonize with their notions. They rejected Jesus as the Messiah because he was not what they thought the Messiah would be and do. They would not listen to his teaching, because he was not authorized by them to teach. His teaching angered them to madness, because he rebuked their wickedness. Because of such perversity, they could not see the things that belonged to peace. The words of Isa. 5: 20, 21 rightly applied to them: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!" Their whole processes of thinking were so warped that they saw everything in reverse.

Jesus here briefly described the things that were coming upon them. The city would be so beset that no one could go out, and

none could come to their rescue. The city and its inhabitants would be dashed to the ground—would be destroyed. It would be an utter overthrow; "they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another." A short time later Jesus again tells them of the troubles that were coming. (Read Matt. 24: 1-44; Mark 13: 1-32; Luke 21: 5-33.) In this last speech about the destruction that was coming upon them Jesus gives a much fuller description of what would occur when the Roman armies came against them. All these calamities they were bringing upon themselves, because they knew not the time of their visitation. The Messiah had come and had patiently sought to turn them from their sins, but in their self-imposed blindness they would not recognize him. If they had only known!

### **Jesus Cleanses the Temple (Verses 45, 46)**

Early in his ministry Jesus made a similar cleansing of the temple. (John 2: 13-16.) A fuller account of this last cleansing of the temple is found in the parallel passages, Matt. 21: 12-16; Mark 11: 15-18, than is found in Luke. The business that was being carried on in the temple could have been carried on in such way as to be helpful to those who came a long distance to worship; but they were committing two wrongs—they were robbing the people and profaning the temple. As the priests had charge of the temple, this business was carried on by their permission. Likely they were reaping a good share of the exorbitant profits. They had made the temple a den of robbers. A den is a place of refuge, a place of security. Hence, the priests were protecting them in their robberies. The temple was God's house, and it was being used as a place of security for these robbers. Jesus drove them out.

### **The Leaders Sought to Destroy Jesus (Verses 47, 48)**

Up to this time the Pharisees had been the bitter enemies of Jesus. But now the priests felt that he had invaded their domain and trespassed on their rights; also without their permission he was teaching daily in the temple! "But the chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people sought to destroy him." They were afraid of the people. They could not think of any way by which they could destroy him without bringing down upon their own heads the wrath of the people. They could see that the people were hearing him with great pleasure—"the people all hung upon him, listening." "Hung upon him" is a strong expression; they were enraptured by his speech. In the presence of such a condition as that, the leaders dared not do violence to Jesus. Justice was not in their thoughts; hatred burned in their hearts; fear controlled their actions.

### **The Leaders Question the Authority of Jesus (Luke 20: 1, 2)**

As the chief priests and scribes and elders dared not make an open attempt to destroy Jesus, they question his authority. "By what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority?" By "these things" these men meant his teaching and cleansing the temple. The scribes and the elders would be most interested in knowing about his authority to teach; the chief priests would want

to know about his authority to cleanse the temple. The scribes and the elders knew that he had not attended the schools in Jerusalem, and that the authorities there had never given him authority to teach. A Jew who was regular in his religion would not have undertaken to be a teacher without being properly authorized to do so. The priests had control of the affairs of the temple; and in all such matters the high priest and the chief priests would control. They would appoint the officers that policed the temple area. They knew that none of them had given Jesus police powers, and yet he had driven certain traders out of the temple. Hence, these leaders thought they could make things look bad for him by showing the people that Jesus was acting very forward without any authority to act at all.

### **Jesus Questions Them About John's Baptism (Verses 3, 4)**

No one who believes the Bible has any difficulty in determining whether the baptism of John was from heaven or of men. A long time before John was born God said through the prophet, "Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me." (Mal. 3: 1.) Again, "The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of Jehovah; make level in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the uneven shall be made level, and the rough places a plain." (Isa. 40: 3, 4.) Inspired writers of the New Testament applied these scriptures to John the Baptist and his work. (Matt. 3: 3; Mark 1: 2, 3; Luke 3: 4-6.) "There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John." (John 1: 6.) John's teaching was therefore from God; God delivered commands through him. He who refused to heed what John said refused to obey God.

### **The Leaders Professed Ignorance (Verses 5-7)**

Before answering Jesus these leaders held a consultation among themselves to see if they could formulate a suitable answer to Jesus. "If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why did ye not believe him?" Hence, it is easily seen, that, in the estimation of these leaders, to believe John meant more than simply to agree that what he said was true; it meant to do what he commanded. If we shall say that the baptism of John was from heaven, he will ask us why we were not baptized by him. To really believe a teacher is to do what he says; to refuse to do what he says shows unbelief in him. And to refuse to believe John was to reject the counsel of God. Concerning the attitude of people toward John and his baptism, Jesus said, "And all the people when they heard, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him." The counsel of God was made known to the Jews through John the Baptist; to refuse to do what he told the people to do was to reject God's counsel. The counsel of God is now made known to us through the writings of God's inspired men who wrote the New Testament; if we reject what is therein commanded, we reject the counsel of God. What was true concerning hearing or refusing to hear the seventy whom Jesus sent out is true of any man whom God sends to teach people: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that rejecteth you rejecteth me;

and he that rejecteth me rejecteth him that sent me." (Luke 10: 16.) These leaders of the Jews knew that, if they said the baptism of John was from God, they would confess themselves to be disobedient to God. If they thus confessed themselves as openly rebellious against God, they could not maintain their leadership over the people. They would also lose in their efforts to maintain a charge of lawlessness against Jesus.

"But if we shall say, From men; all the people will stone us: for they are persuaded that John was a prophet." They knew the temper of a Jewish mob when aroused. It is almost certain that they did think the baptism of John was from men; otherwise, they would have made some outward show of obedience to him in being baptized; but now they were afraid to put into words what their actions had proclaimed all along. And yet not all the leaders were hardened sinners; for there were among them such characters as Zacharias and Elisabeth; Simeon and Anna, a prophetess; Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. But the majority of them were like those who were now trying to find some excuse to destroy Jesus. And these were too cowardly to speak their sentiments. It must have been humiliating to them to confess ignorance, but it seemed to them to be the easiest way out to say that they did not know whence was the baptism of John.

### Jesus Refused to Answer Them (Verse 8)

The question had put his questioners where they could say no more; so he said, "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things." He had not appealed to John's baptism as his authority for doing what he had done. It has been argued that cleansing the temple was a priestly function, and that when questioned about his authority, he had appealed to John's baptism—that he was inducted into the priestly office by John's baptism. But Paul plainly states that he could not be a priest on earth. (Heb. 8: 4.) Besides, instead of referring to John's baptism as the source of his authority, he plainly told them that he would not tell them by what authority he did these things.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Jesus did not merely condemn sin, and let the sinner alone. He was especially severe on the leaders among the Jews. He told the Jews plainly what would happen to them and their fair city because of their sins.

Perhaps it is not becoming in us to enquire as to how much authority Jesus had while on earth. He did have authority to forgive sins, as is plainly stated in Mark 2: 10; and certainly he did not teach the people and cleanse the temple without authority. Yet notice what he himself says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing." (John 5: 19.) Verse 30: "I can of myself do nothing." "The works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." (John 5: 36.) Verse 43: "I am come in my Father's name." He spoke as the Father taught him. (John 8: 28.) "For I spake not from myself; but the Father that sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life eternal; the things therefore which I speak, even

as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak." (John 12: 49, 50.) But repentance and remission of sins began to be preached in his name at Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles. (Luke 24: 46-49; Acts 2.) "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." (Acts 2: 36.) Immediately a proclamation of pardon was issued in the name of this now exalted Messiah. "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Shall we make the church, God's temple, a place of merchandise?  
The Jewish nation and its downfall.  
John's baptism.  
The authority of Christ.

### QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

Give some incidents that occurred in Perea as Jesus journeyed to Jerusalem.

What occurred at Jericho?

What effect did his entrance into Jerusalem have on his enemies?

#### Verses 41-44

Why did Jesus weep over Jerusalem? Repeat what he said.

Discuss the causes that brought destruction upon the Jewish nation.

#### Verses 45, 46

Describe the cleansing of the temple. Tell about an earlier cleansing of the temple.

Why was the temple then a den of thieves?

#### Verses 47, 48

Who had been the most bitter enemies of Jesus?

Why did the priests now become so active against him?

Why did these enemies of Jesus not destroy him?

#### Luke 20: 1, 2

What question did these enemies ask Jesus?

What special matters would each class be interested in?

#### Verses 3, 4

Give the prophecies concerning John. What would all this imply as to his commands?

#### Verses 5-7

What question had Jesus asked them?

What alternatives did they discuss among themselves?

If they said John's baptism was of God, what then?

What is said of those who rejected John's baptism?

Why did they not say his baptism was of men?

What did they really say?

#### Verse 8

What did Jesus say?

Was it possible that John's baptism made Jesus priest?

Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson X—March 9, 1941

### CHRIST REJECTED

Luke 20: 9-20

9 And he began to speak unto the people this parable: A man planted a vineyard, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into another country for a long time.

10 And at the season he sent unto the husbandmen a servant, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty.

11 And he sent yet another servant: and him also they beat, and handled him shamefully, and sent him away empty.

12 And he sent yet a third: and him also they wounded, and cast him forth.  
13 And the lord of the vineyard said, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; it may be they will reverence him.

14 But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned one with another, saying, This is the heir; let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.

15 And they cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do unto them?

16 He will come and destroy these husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid.

17 But he looked upon them, and said, What then is this that is written, The stone which the builders rejected,  
The same was made the head of the corner?

18 Every one that falleth on that stone shall be broken to pieces; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust.

19 And the scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him in that very hour; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he spake this parable against them.

20 And 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.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." (Matt. 5: 11.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—2 Tim. 2: 3-13.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS.**—

|          |    |       |  |
|----------|----|-------|--|
| March 3. | M. | ..... | The Wicked Husbandman (Luke 20: 9-18)              |
| March 4. | T. | ..... | Seeking to Trap Jesus (Luke 20: 19, 20)            |
| March 5. | W. | ..... | The Captious Question About Taxes (Luke 20: 21-26) |
| March 6. | T. | ..... | Moses Opposed (Heb. 11: 24-27)                     |
| March 7. | F. | ..... | Christ's Followers Opposed (Matt. 10: 16-22)       |
| March 8. | S. | ..... | Paul Persecuted (2 Cor. 11: 23-27)                 |
| March 9. | S. | ..... | Reproached but Rejoicing (Matt. 5: 10-12)          |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 31.

*Place.*—Jerusalem, probably in the temple.

*Persons.*—Jesus, the people, and the scribes and chief priests.

*Lesson Links.*—Opposition to Jesus began early in his ministry, and soon developed to downright enmity. This was especially true of the attitude of the Pharisees. They were wedded to their tradition, and Jesus disregarded all tradition. At the first his course brought upon himself criticisms; but the antagonism grew, till they began to seek an opportunity to accuse him before the Roman authorities. They worked various schemes to get him to say something that could be used against him before the Roman authorities. Having failed in this, they made up their minds to destroy him however they might be able to do so. So blind and warped had they become in their thinking, that they thought they were really doing service to God and the nation in putting him to death.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### The Jewish Nation as a Vineyard (Verse 9)

The Bible abounds in striking figures of speech. In a beautiful figure of speech the Psalmist represents Israel as a vine which God brought out of Egypt and planted in the land of Palestine, which grew and spread till it filled the land from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean Sea. (Psalm 80: 8-16.) Also Israel is set forth as a vineyard

in prophecy. "Let me sing for my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved had a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he digged it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also hewed out a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" And then he tells of the destruction that he would bring upon his vineyard. (Isa. 5: 1-7.) The parable of our lesson is very much like the passage quoted from Isaiah. It is easy to press a parable, or any figure of speech, too far. Not everything in a parable can be applied to the matter illustrated by the parable. However, the main features of this parable seem clear enough. "A man planted a vineyard"—God was the planter and the Jewish nation was the vineyard. From further statements in the parable it is plain that the Jewish leaders—the authorities—were the husbandmen. The main emphasis of the parable is placed on the conduct of the husbandmen.

The owner of the vineyard made full preparation of all things necessary for the successful operation of his vineyard. Matthew gives a fuller statement than does Luke. "There was a man that was a householder, who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into another country." (Matt. 21: 33.)

### **The Husbandmen Became Greedy Murderers (Verses 10-12)**

The owner expected returns from his vineyard; to that end he, of course, had made a contract with the husbandmen. They were not to pay money rent, but a certain part of what the vineyard produced. "And at the season he sent unto the husbandmen a servant, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard." If Jesus meant that these servants should have any special application in the parable, it seems that they represented the prophets and teachers whom God had so often sent to the Jewish nation. At least, these servants fared about as did the prophets whom God had sent. On another occasion Jesus himself said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her own brood under her wings, and ye would not!" And Stephen said to the leaders in Jerusalem: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them that showed before of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers; ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not." (Acts 7: 51-53.) And they further verified the words of Stephen by murdering him! But in the parable of our lesson the servants whom the owner of the vineyard sent in succession to collect his rents were not killed. They beat the first servant, "and sent him away empty." The second servant fared even worse—"him also they beat, and handled him shamefully, and sent him away empty." Their intention of giving nothing, but claiming every-

thing, was growing stronger. Greed unrestrained grows stronger, and the greedy heart grows harder. "And he sent yet a third: and him also they wounded, and cast him forth." They did not send him away; they threw him out, and let him manage his wounds as best he could. It would seem that by now the owner of the vineyard would have reached the limit of patience with these wicked husbandmen.

### **The Owner of the Vineyard Sends His Son (Verses 13, 14)**

It seems that the lord of the vineyard was in doubt as to what move to make next. "What shall I do?" Of course his doubts were not meant to represent any such hesitancy on the part of God, for he does not have to worry about what to do next. The lord of the vineyard decided on a move that he thought might work, but of that he was not sure. "I will send my beloved son; it may be they will reverence him." This is meant to represent God's sending his only begotten Son to the nation of the Jews. It must be noted that the personal ministry of Jesus was among the Jews; but the ultimate benefits of his mission were meant for the whole world. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him." (John 3: 16, 17.) And the leaders of the Jews did to the Son of God just what the husbandmen of the parable did to the son of the lord of the vineyard. In the parable the husbandmen killed the son, so that they might take possession of the vineyard. "They cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him." And thus their greed and their growing hardness of heart led them to commit murder; they murdered the son of the man who had been their benefactor. And their conduct illustrates the attitude of the leaders of the Jews toward the Son of God.

### **The Doom of the Husbandmen Pronounced (Verses 15, 16)**

Jesus raises the question, "What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do unto them?" The same parable, or else a similar one, is recorded in Matthew 21: 33-46 and Mark 12: 1-12. In Matthew's account the hearers are represented as answering Jesus. "They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those miserable men, and will let out the vineyard unto other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their seasons." And so the leaders of the Jews or else the people pronounced their own doom. The language in Luke shows that Jesus also made the same pronouncement. The parable is prophetic—it shows what was to happen to these Jewish leaders. In the destruction of the nation of the Jews the leaders of the Jews were destroyed, as well as the people who supported them. The blind led the blind; they both fell into the pit. They reaped as they had sown. They had persecuted and stoned God's prophets, murdered his Son, and then sought with all their might to destroy his church. It was not as if individuals here and there had committed murders; in these matters the nation through its authorities had committed the crimes. Death was the penalty—death to the nation.

**The Rejected Stone Became the Headstone (Verses 17, 18)**

Here the figure is quickly changed from a vineyard to a building. It is as if masons in building a house continually passed by and rejected the only stone that would finish and perfect the building. The leaders of the Jews were the builders, and Jesus was the stone. They rejected him as unfit for the building; and yet in God's own time and way he became the head of the corner; in fact, he became the head of all things concerning the salvation of man. When God raised up Jesus from the dead, he "made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1: 20-23.)

The first clause of verse 18 presents a difficulty: "Every one that falleth on that stone shall be broken to pieces." In what way might these Jews fall on Jesus? Perhaps Paul's language in 1 Cor. 1: 23 will give us some help: "We preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumblingblock, and unto Gentiles foolishness." Also notice the following language of Peter, in which he makes quotations from Isa. 28: 16, and Psalm 118: 22, and Isa. 8: 14: "Because it is contained in scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: And he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame. For you therefore that believe is the preciousness: but for such as disbelieve, The stone which the builders rejected, The same was made the head of the corner; and, A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence; for they stumble, being disobedient to the word." (1 Pet. 2: 6-8. See the marginal reading in the American Standard Version.) It all sums up to this: The Jews had their own ideas as to what the Messiah would be, and Jesus did not measure up to their ideas. They believed that the Messiah would abide with them forever when he did come. Jesus crucified, yet preached as the Messiah, was to them a stone of stumbling. On that stone they fell—literally when they crucified him, spiritually when they rejected him. Because of this the whole nation was broken to pieces. Then Jesus fell on the Jewish people in judgment in the destruction of their nation. Since then the whole nation has been scattered as dust.

**The Leaders Stirred to Greater Enmity (Verses 19, 20)**

Matthew gives this additional statement: "And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them." But instead of heeding his words, and seeking to amend their ways so as to avert the threatened doom, they became the more angry and the more determined to destroy him. "And the scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him in that very hour." From early in the ministry of Jesus their hatred of him had been growing, till it had now become bitter malice, and they were ready to commit murder. "And they feared the people: for they perceived that he spake this parable against them." Only the fear of the people restrained their murderous desire. But their purpose could be accomplished, if only they could entrap him into saying something of a treasonable nature against the Roman government.

To that end they sent spies who professed to be righteous and to be seeking information on a point that had been a source of trouble among them. If he said it was right to pay tribute to the Romans, they hoped the Jews would turn against him. If he said it was not right, they knew that they could accuse him before the governor. It was a shrewd scheme, but it did not work out as they expected, as the student will see by reading the verses that follow immediately after the printed text of our lesson.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

It is hardly possible that any other people were ever so race-conscious as were the Jews at the period when Jesus walked and taught among them. They were proud of their race; and, strange to say, they took great pride in their religion. Outwardly they were very religious, but inwardly they were very corrupt. They wore their religion outwardly, as people wear fine clothing in a dress parade. Their pride in their religion and in their race gave them a feeling of superiority over all other people. This was especially true of the Pharisees; and because of these traits they could not brook criticism. When therefore they perceived that the parables of Jesus reflected unfavorably on them, they became more enraged than ever.

To the scribes and Pharisees Jesus said, "Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men." (Matt. 15: 7-9.) Because they professed devotion to God, but in their hearts rejected him, the nation fell. What then must be the fate of the nation that rejects God entirely?

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The Pharisees.

How they made void the commands of God.

Why Christ crucified was a stumbling block to the Jews.

Who were the chief priests?

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
Discuss the growing opposition to Jesus.

#### Verse 9

Discuss Psalm 80: 8-16.  
Discuss Isa. 5: 1-7.  
Discuss verse 9 of our lesson.

#### Verses 10-12

Why and when did the owner of the vineyard send servants to the husbandmen?

How was each one treated?  
Whom did these servants seem to represent?

How had the prophets fared? Give some examples.

#### Verses 13, 14

What did he say about sending his son?

Quote passages showing why God sent his Son into the world.

What was done to the son in the parable?

How was Jesus treated?

#### Verses 15, 16

What question did Jesus raise?

How was it answered?

How and when was this judgment executed?

#### Verses 17, 18

Discuss the rejected stone.

How did that represent Jesus?

When did Jesus become head?

Discuss verse 18; also 1 Peter 2: 6-8.

#### Verses 19, 20

Why did this parable stir the chief priests and Pharisees to greater anger?

Discuss the growing enmity of the Pharisees.

What plan did they now fall on to get Jesus to say something that would be a snare to him?

Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson XI—March 16, 1941

## THE LORD'S SUPPER

Luke 22: 14-30

- 14 And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the apostles with him.  
 15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:  
 16 For I say unto you, I shall not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.  
 17 And he received a cup, and when he had given thanks, he said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:  
 18 For I say unto you, I shall not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.  
 19 And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.  
 20 And the cup in like manner after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you.  
 21 But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.  
 22 For the Son of man indeed goeth, as it hath been determined: but woe unto that man through whom he is betrayed!  
 23 And they began to question among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.  
 24 And there arose also a contention among them, which of them was accounted to be greatest.  
 25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gën'tiles have lordship over them; and they that have authority over them are called Benefactors.  
 26 But ye shall not be so: but he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.  
 27 For which is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am in the midst of you as he that serveth.  
 28 But ye are they that have continued with me in my temptations;  
 29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father appointed unto me.  
 30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and ye shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Is'rá-él.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“As often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come.” (1 Cor. 11: 26.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Jer. 31: 31-34.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|           |    |   |
|-----------|----|---|
| March 10. | M. | Preparing the Upper Room (Luke 22: 7-13)            |
| March 11. | T. | Partaking of the Last Supper (Luke 22: 14-23)       |
| March 12. | W. | The Reward of Service (Luke 22: 24-30)              |
| March 13. | T. | The Lord's Supper Instituted (Matt. 26: 26-29)      |
| March 14. | F. | The Lord's Supper Continuous (1 Cor. 11: 23-26)     |
| March 15. | S. | Observing the Ordinance Properly (1 Cor. 11: 27-31) |
| March 16. | S. | The Bread of Life (John 6: 48-51)                   |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 31; the night before Jesus was crucified, generally understood to have been Thursday night.

*Place.*—Jerusalem, in an upper room.

*Persons.*—Jesus and his apostles.

*Lesson Links.*—During the Passover week Jesus lodged each night in Bethany; but the days, save one, were spent in Jerusalem teaching the people in the temple. “And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might put him to death.” “And he was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people sought to destroy him; and they could not find what they might do; for the people all hung upon him, listen-

ing." They wished to seize Jesus in the absence of the multitudes, and have him condemned by the Sanhedrin before the people knew what was going on. "Then were gathered together the chief priests, and the elders of the people, unto the court of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas; and they took counsel together that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him. But they said, Not during the feast, lest a tumult arise among the people." (Matt. 26: 3-5.) But help from an unexpected source somewhat changed their plans. Judas, one of the twelve, volunteered his help; for money he agreed to deliver Jesus into their hands in the absence of the multitude.

Whether Jesus and his apostles ate this last passover at the regular time or the night before has been a matter of some discussion, but it is not necessary to go into that in this lesson. It is significant that the Lord's Supper was instituted in connection with the observance of the Passover, for the Passover itself was a commemorative feast. The student can read of the origin of the Passover Feast in Ex. 12: 1-36. Some additional regulations are given in Deut. 16: 1-8. At the first the passover was eaten in their homes; but it was not to be so when they became settled in the land of Canaan. They were then to observe the feast in the place where God recorded his name; and Jerusalem became that place. In obedience to that provision of the law Jesus had come with his disciples to Jerusalem to this last Passover that was kept under the law of Moses. Jehovah's Passover ceased. Though Judas had bargained to betray Jesus into the hands of his enemies, he brazenly reclined at the table to eat the passover with Jesus and the other apostles. It must have been at the close of the Passover Feast that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper.

Of course, every supper is the Lord's; but there is a supper that is especially devoted to him; also every day is the Lord's, but there is a day that is his in a special sense. The Lord's Supper and the Lord's day; these are inseparably connected. The early church met on the Lord's day to eat the Lord's Supper and to engage in other acts of worship.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### The Last Passover (Verses 14-16)

To properly prepare this lesson the student must give close attention to the parallel passages, Matt. 26: 20-29; Mark 14: 17-25; 1 Cor. 11: 17-34.

It seems that Jesus had remained in Bethany during the day. Peter and John had gone into Jerusalem during the day, and had made ready the Passover. When the hour for eating the passover came, "he sat down, and the apostles with him." In giving directions for eating the first passover the Lord said, "And thus shall ye eat it: with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is Jehovah's passover." This arrangement was necessary on the night of the first Passover, so that they might be ready to flee from Egypt on a moment's notice. This arrangement seems not to have been followed at subsequent feasts, for no such preparation and haste would be necessary any more. Hence, Jesus and his apostles sat, or reclined, at the table. As Jesus had directed in the arrangement of this feast, and was also the Lord, he was the host and the apostles his guests.

And treacherous Judas was there. It seems that Judas, after having bargained with the Jewish authorities to deliver Jesus into their hands, would not have had the courage or shameless boldness to show his face at that feast.

We cannot know what emotions surged in the bosom of Jesus as he looked over his little flock, and said, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." This peculiar expression means that he had earnestly desired to eat this passover—this, the last passover before his suffering. The Passover was both commemorative and typical. It commemorated the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. (Ex. 12.) It was a type of Christ; and it seems also that the unleavened bread eaten during the week beginning with the Passover was typical of the purity that should be in the church. "Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened. For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ: wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Cor. 5: 7, 8.) Hence, as types, both the lamb and the unleavened bread were fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

### **The Kingdom of God Had Not Come (Verses 17, 18)**

Commentators generally say that the cup here mentioned was a cup used in connection with the Passover—a drink that was a part of the Passover ceremonies. Yet the text does not so state. It could be that Jesus was making the first move in the establishing of the Lord's Supper. It is true that the cup, a part of the Lord's Supper, is mentioned later; but it is possible that Jesus was here distributing the wine in preparation for the supper. Each one at the table had his own drinking cup; the cup here mentioned could have been divided among them to be used at the proper time. Does not the language of Jesus rather suggest this idea? "I say unto you, I shall not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come." This language plainly shows that the kingdom of God had not then come. And this conclusion is in harmony with other statements about the kingdom. John preached, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 3: 2.) Jesus preached the same doctrine. (Matt. 4: 17.) The seventy were commanded to say, "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." (Luke 10: 9.) There had to be a time of preparation before the coming of the kingdom, and that time was about past.

### **The Lord's Supper Both Commemorative and Declarative (Verses 19, 20)**

The passover had been eaten, and they still lingered at the table. Some bread yet remained from the feast; perhaps Jesus had kept some for a special purpose. Only unleavened bread was available, for none other was allowed during the week of the Passover. "Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel." (Ex. 12: 15.) Care and skill are necessary in preparing the bread, and there certainly should be someone in

every church who cared enough for the Lord's body to prepare fresh bread for every Lord's day.

"And he took bread." The marginal reading has, Or, *a loaf*. He then gave thanks, and "broke it." In common parlance, to *break bread* is to *eat*. Jesus ate some of the bread himself, thus setting an example for the disciples. The language therefore does not mean that Jesus broke the bread into fragments before passing it on to the apostles. "This is my body." Not his literal body, for his own body was still alive and sitting before them, and holding the bread in his hand. It would be hard for any thoughtful person to believe that Jesus was holding his literal body in his hands! The figure of speech Jesus used is common in the Bible. The bread Jesus held in his hand was bread when eaten. In the eleventh chapter of First Corinthians we have these expressions: "As often as ye eat this bread," "whosoever shall eat the bread," "so let him eat of the bread." Hence, it is bread we eat, and not the real body of the Lord. And we are to eat it in remembrance of him—"This do in remembrance of me." Not simply in remembrance of his death, but of *him*; nor are we to do it in order to remember him. Rather we do it because we do remember him. "And the cup in like manner." This was the fruit of the vine, and was also to be a permanent part of the Lord's Supper. "Poured out for you." He shed his blood, not because of anything he had done, but because of the sins of the world. The law of God had been violated by man—by all men who had lived and who would yet live. Justice had been outraged. Some one had to pay the penalty, or all men would be lost. Jesus, having no sins of his own for which to die, could die for the sins of all men; and now, by accepting his sacrifice, all men may be saved. "For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins." (Matt. 26: 28.)

### Conversation About the Betrayal (Verses 21-23) •

Judas evidently did not know that Jesus knew of his bargain with the Jewish authorities. Hence, he, as well as the other disciples, must have been astonished when Jesus said, "But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table." Jesus came into the world to die for the sins of the world; but the part Judas played was of his own choosing. Hence, Jesus said, "Woe unto that man through whom he is betrayed." None but Judas knew to whom these words applied; and of course Judas had to pretend that he did not know. None but Judas knew that the words of Jesus concerning his betrayal had already begun to be fulfilled; nor did they know what any of them might do in the distant future. And so "they began to question among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing."

### Contention About Who Should Be Greatest (Verses 24-27)

So many people like to be considered great; they are more interested in that than they are in being great. They forget that being exalted to high positions does not transform mediocrity into greatness. The Pharisees loved to have the chief seats in the synagogues, and now the disciples in the very shadow of the cross of Jesus were contending about who would occupy the highest positions in the kingdom of God. That idea of greatness is of a purely worldly

nature. God has a different standard of greatness. But man's standard of greatness too often is not the standard of measurement in the kingdom of God. Like Diotrefes, some love to have the pre-eminence. (3 John 9.) And so the spirit that prevails in the world also works in the kingdom of God; and humility and service—God's standards of greatness—are forgotten in a scramble for places of prominence even in the church. And that sort of thing is contrary to the spirit that moved Jesus, who said, "But I am in the midst of you as he that serveth." Greatness belongs to character, and not to position. Such scrambling for position is in direct disobedience to Christ, who said, "But ye shall not be so."

### "I Appoint Unto You a Kingdom" (Verses 28-30)

Judas had eliminated himself; he was no longer considered in matters pertaining to the kingdom of God. No promise at this time applied to him. To his faithful apostles he said, "I appoint unto you a kingdom." In a similar statement Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matt. 19: 28.) In this kingdom the apostles would be next to him in authority. Notice this: "I appoint unto you a kingdom, . . . that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom." The kingdom would still be his kingdom. They had been chosen as his ambassadors. (2 Cor. 5: 20.) They had been given authority to bind and to loose on earth. (Matt. 16: 19.) This authority would be theirs when they were endued with the power of the Holy Spirit. (Luke 24: 46-49; Acts 1: 8.) It would be impossible for them to ever have any more power than they had by the continued abiding presence of the full power of the Holy Spirit. And that power or authority is still over us in their writings. Their writings are still the authority in the kingdom of Christ.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Somewhere at a certain time the Lord's Supper began. He who declares that Jesus established no such supper or he never lived is met with some unanswerable questions. What it stands for is well known. If it is pronounced a fraud, let the one who says so tell us how it began—how some impostor could have made the first group of communicants believe that such a supper had been observed every Lord's day since Jesus was said to have lived. If the Lord's Supper is not what it is claimed and believed to be, no one can tell how it could possibly have begun. Its very existence is an unanswerable argument as to the origin that is claimed for it. Hence, the supper is not only a memorial, but it powerfully proclaims Christ. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come." (1 Cor. 11: 26.)

If a man is going to scheme and scramble for positions of prominence in the church, he should have remained out of the church and gratified his unholy greed in political preferments. But more is the pity that some churches encourage such ambitions. Let us not forget such statements as these: "Blessed are the poor in spirit," "Blessed are they that mourn," "Blessed are the meek." "Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to things that are lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits." (Rom. 12: 16.)

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

- What the Passover meant to the children of Israel.  
 What the Lord's Supper means to the Christian.  
 The proper observance of the Lord's Supper.  
 Evils of worldly ambition in the church, and how manifested.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

- Give time, place, and persons.  
 What had the Jewish leaders decided to do about destroying Jesus?  
 Who made it unnecessary for them to wait?  
 Tell about the Passover.  
 Why designate one supper as the Lord's Supper and one day as the Lord's day?

#### Verses 14-16

- Give some of the movements of Jesus during the days immediately before the last Passover.  
 Tell about the first regulations governing the Passover.  
 In what way were the Passover and the unleavened bread typical?

#### Verses 17, 18

- What language of Jesus shows that the kingdom had not then come?  
 Give some other passages on the same point.

#### Verses 19, 20

- What proof is there that only unleavened bread was on the table?

What did Jesus do and say about the bread?

What is the proof that the bread did not become his real flesh?

Discuss the meaning of, "This do in remembrance of me."

Is there such an idea in the Bible that we eat the bread in order to remember him?

What is said of the fruit of the vine?

Why was the death of Jesus necessary to our salvation?

Discuss Matt. 26: 28.

#### Verses 21-23

Tell what Jesus said about his betrayal.

What did the apostles say about it?

#### Verses 24-27

What were the apostles discussing among themselves?

What idea did they have as to greatness?

What did Jesus say to them?

What is God's standard of greatness?

#### Verses 28-30

Discuss these verses and also other scriptures bearing on the same point.

Discuss the reflections.

### Lesson XII—March 23, 1941

## JESUS CONDEMNED AND CRUCIFIED

Luke 23: 13-25, 32-34

13 And Pí'láte called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people,  
 14 And said unto them, Ye brought unto me this man, as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I, having examined him before you, found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him:

15 No, nor yet Hēr'öd: for he sent him back unto us; and behold, nothing worthy of death hath been done by him.

16 I will therefore chastise him, and release him.

17 But they cried out all together, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Bär-áb'bás:—

18 One who for a certain insurrection made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.

19 And Pí'láte spake unto them again, desiring to release Jē'sūs;

20 But they shouted, saying, Crucify, crucify him.

21 And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath this man done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him and release him.

22 But they were urgent with loud voices, asking that he might be crucified. And their voices prevailed.

24 And Pī'lāte gave sentence that what they asked for should be done.  
 25 And he released him that for insurrection and murder had been cast into prison, whom they asked for; but Jē'sūs he delivered up to their will.

32 And there were also two others, malefactors, led with him to be put to death.

33 And when they came unto the place which is called The skull, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left.

34 And Jē'sūs said, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“What then shall I do unto Jesus who is called Christ?” (Matt. 27: 22.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 53: 7-12.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|           |    |   |
|-----------|----|---|
| March 17. | M. | Jesus Arraigned (Luke 23: 1-7)                  |
| March 18. | T. | Pilate Declares Jesus Innocent (Luke 23: 13-17) |
| March 19. | W. | Jesus Condemned (Luke 23: 18-25)                |
| March 20. | T. | Jesus Crucified (Luke 23: 32-38)                |
| March 21. | F. | Jesus and the Penitent Thief (Luke 23: 39-43)   |
| March 22. | S. | The Death of Jesus (Luke 23: 44-47)             |
| March 23. | S. | Why Christ Died (Isa. 53: 4-6)                  |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 31; according to most authorities, Friday.  
*Places.*—Pilate's judgment hall; The skull, or, “according to the Latin, *Calvary*, which has the same meaning.” The skull, the place of the crucifixion, was outside the city.

*Persons.*—“And Pilate called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people.” Herod also had a part in the proceedings. The soldiers nailed Jesus to the cross. Jesus was the central figure in it all.

*Lesson Links.*—While Jesus and his disciples were still in the upper room where they ate the passover and where the Lord's Supper was instituted, Jesus made a speech to his disciples, closing with a prayer. “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.” (John 18: 1.) The garden into which they entered is called Gethsemane. (Matt. 26: 36.) On the way to the garden Jesus said to the apostles, “All ye shall be offended in me this night.” “Offend” is used in the Bible in the sense of “cause to stumble.” That which would happen to him would be the cause of their stumbling. They had expected him to take the reins of authority as their mighty and long expected Messiah; now to see him meekly submit to his enemies would cause them to doubt, to lose hope. But they all affirmed that they would not stumble.

It seems that Gethsemane was a quiet place, a place for rest and relaxation; “for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with his disciples.” But on this occasion Jesus went to that garden for prayer and communion with his Father in heaven. None of us can know his distress of heart and soul. The agony of that hour wrenched from him the cry, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” Three times he prayed earnestly that the cup, the cup of suffering and shame, might be removed from him, if it were the Father's will; yet in perfect resignation he said, “Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.” Then came a band of soldiers, who, being guided

to the right person by the kiss of Judas, seized Jesus and led him away to the house of Annas first; "for he was father in law to Caiaphas, who was high priest that year." (John 18: 12, 13.) Here he was carried through a sort of mock trial, and then led away to the house of Caiaphas. The Romans dealt rather highhandedly with the Jewish priesthood. Annas had once been the high priest, having been appointed to that office by Quirinus, the Roman governor of Syria, A.D. 7. About A.D. 14 the Roman procurator of Judea forced him out in favor of Ishmael. About A.D. 25 Joseph Caiaphas became high priest. It seems that the Jews then regarded both Annas and Caiaphas as high priests. As Annas was older and more experienced, it was natural for the Jews to take Jesus to him first.

The Sanhedrin had decided to put Jesus to death before they ever seized him. Their pretended trial was a mere formality. In their own way they found him guilty of blasphemy; so they charged. But no sentence, either in Jewish or Roman law, passed in the night, was legal. When it was day they held another session of the Sanhedrin to give their decision the semblance of legality. But when they took him before Pilate they had to make new charges, for Pilate would care nothing for their charge of blasphemy. They accused him before Pilate of perverting their nation, forbidding to give tribute, and claiming to be king. Pilate, finding these charges false, sent him to Herod, who was in the city; and Herod returned him to Pilate.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Pilate Calls the Sanhedrin Before Him (Verses 13-16)

Having, on examination, found no crime in Jesus, Pilate called the accusers together to hear his verdict. His verdict was really a charge against them and a complete clearing of Jesus. "For he knew that for envy they had delivered him up." (Matt. 27: 18.) It is well to remember the judgment Pilate rendered: "Ye brought unto me this man, as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I, having examined him before you, found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him." He had given them a chance to prove their charges, and they had failed. While the trial was in progress, he learned that Jesus was of Galilee. "And when he knew that he was of Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him unto Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem in these days." This was Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee. Herod had found no crime in Jesus worthy of death. Pilate had found no fault in Jesus, and Herod had found no fault in him. "I will therefore chastise him, and release him." If there was no fault in Jesus, why chastise him? Evidently Pilate hoped that chastising Jesus would appease the Jews. But he did not understand the temper of a Jewish mob.

### A Peculiar Custom (Verses 18, 19)

Whether Pilate or some former Roman authority over the Jews had established the custom of releasing a prisoner at the feast, we have no information given in the New Testament. "Now at the feast he used to release unto them one prisoner, whom they asked of him. And there was one called Barabbas, lying bound with them that had made insurrection, men who in the insurrection had committed murder." (Mark 15: 6, 7.) This man Barabbas was also

a robber. (John 18: 40.) As the Jews hated Roman rule so intensely, it would be natural for them to call for the release of a prisoner who had antagonized the Roman authorities. Yet Barabbas was a robber and a murderer as well as an insurrectionist; but even so, the Jews, led by their highest tribunal, asked that this notorious criminal be turned loose on the people, and that Jesus be crucified! To Pilate it was a very embarrassing situation; he knew Jesus was innocent, and he wanted to release him. He also wanted to appease the wrath of the Jews. Another thing occurred that did not contribute toward his peace of mind: "And while he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." (Matt. 27: 19.) Pilate may have been sufficiently brave physically, but he was a poor, vacillating, moral coward. It was his duty to keep order among the Jews, and he could see that trouble was brewing; and yet he knew that the leaders of the Jews were demanding the blood of an innocent man, a man who he knew was more righteous than his accusers.

### **"Their Voices Prevailed" (Verses 20-23)**

Frequently people are torn by two conflicting desires; then, all things being equal, the strongest desire prevails. It was so with Pilate. He desired to release Jesus; he knew that justice demanded his release. But he was dealing with a Jewish court that had now become merely the leaders of a frenzied mob. Reason and justice, as with all mobs, had no weight with them. When he again proposed to release Jesus, they raised a great shout, "Crucify, crucify him." Again he tried to quiet them, and stir up in them some sense of justice. "Why, what evil hath this man done? I have found no cause of death in him." But he was trying to reason with a group that had lost all reason. All mobs are more or less unreasoning; but it is said that a Jewish mob was the fiercest, noisiest, and wildest of all mobs. They would not listen to Pilate; the fact that a Roman governor wanted to release him made them more determined that it should not be done. "But they were urgent with loud voices, asking that he might be crucified." Pilate cared little for human life; if he could quiet such a mob by sacrificing the life of even an innocent man, he would do so. "And their voices prevailed."

### **Jesus Sentenced to Death (Verses 24, 25)**

Pilate's judgment was, "I find no crime in him," and yet he signed his death warrant—knowingly sentenced an innocent man to death; "and he released him that for insurrection and murder had been cast into prison, whom they asked for; but Jesus he delivered up to their will." And why? "So when Pilate saw that he prevailed nothing, but rather that a tumult was arising, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see ye to it." Either Jesus had to be crucified, or else soldiers would have to be called out to quell that frenzied mob; and calling out the soldiers would mean much slaughter. Yet he tried to impress them that he was innocent in the matter. In fact, he was not so guilty as were the leaders of the Jews. In the process of the trial Jesus said to Pilate, "Thou wouldest have no power against me, except it were given thee

from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath greater sin." (John 19: 11.) But washing his hands did not clear Pilate of guilt; neither did his declaration that he was "innocent of the blood of this righteous man" clear him. Nor did it clear him when the people said, "His blood be on us, and on our children." Herein the people declared themselves to be ready to assume full responsibility for the death of Jesus. Of course, these in authority among the Jews took the lead in such a declaration as that. But later this possibility gave these same leaders some anxiety. When the apostles were making so many converts in Jerusalem, it occurred to them that sentiment might so change that they would be brought before the authorities on a charge of murdering Jesus. Hence, they said to the apostles, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name: and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." (Acts 5: 28.) They knew all along that they had made false charges against Jesus, and that they were criminals; they were now afraid that their whole course in the matter would be aired before the Roman courts. If that was done, they knew that they would have to answer for the blood of Jesus. And that is one reason for their being so anxious to stop the preaching of the apostles. But it seems that the Roman authorities paid very little attention to what the Jews did, excepting to see to it that they paid tribute and raised no disturbance against Roman rule.

#### **"They Crucified Him" (Verses 32-34)**

As Jesus was led away, to be crucified, "there followed him a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children." This was said with reference to the tribulations that were to come upon the Jews in the destruction of Jerusalem and the nation. A woman would then be in a happier condition, if she had no children, than if she had children—she would not be worrying and sorrowing about her children.

Two malefactors were led out with Jesus to be crucified. These men are referred to as thieves, or robbers. It seems that, in crucifying Jesus between these thieves, those who arranged the matter thus, were making a direct attempt to add insult and humiliation to the pains of crucifixion. It does not seem that the ingenuity of man could have devised a more cruel method of execution than crucifixion. Nor does it seem possible that men occupying high positions in their nation could have been so devoid of human feeling as to gloat over the sufferings of their victim, as is related by some of the other writers. And yet Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." In one sense they did know what they were doing—they knew that they were having an active part in crucifying Jesus, and they knew that they were mocking him as he suffered on the cross; but in an important sense they did not know. They knew also that Jesus was innocent of the charges they had made against him; but they did not know that they were crucifying the Son of God; they did not know that they were putting to death their long-expected Messiah. "And now, brethren, I know that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." (Acts 3: 17.) "For they that dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers,

because they knew him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him." (Acts 13: 27.) Ignorance does not excuse, but a sin of ignorance is not as bad as a presumptuous sin.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

In selling Jesus to the Jews, Judas in reality sold himself to Satan. It is said of certain Old Testament characters that they sold themselves to do evil. (1 Kings 21: 20, 25; 2 Kings 17: 17.) So did Judas.

Was Jesus on trial before the Sanhedrin and then before Pilate? It would seem so, and yet was he? Were not rather the Sanhedrin and Pilate on trial before the world and before God?

The trials and crucifixion of Jesus was, and yet is, the world's greatest and most peculiar drama. Every actor in that tragedy acted naturally, and yet none save Jesus knew that he was playing a role that had been written for him in the prophets centuries before. It is a thought that can easily be expanded into an effective lecture, or sermon.

And there was Judas the traitor. We sometimes feel that the English language does not contain words of sufficient force to describe fully the blackness of his crime; but was he any worse than the chief priests and the elders—the members of the Sanhedrin? He was the only one of these evil actors that suffered sufficient remorse of conscience to cause him to hang himself! If the others regretted what they did, we have no account of it. And every man today who rejects Christ, virtually sides with those evil actors.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Judas Iscariot.

The Sanhedrin at the time of the crucifixion.

Pilate.

Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus before the Sanhedrin and before Pilate.

### QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.

After the institution of the Lord's Supper, where did Jesus go with the apostles?

What conversation took place along the way?

Give the incidents in the garden of Gethsemane.

To whom was Jesus led from the garden?

Tell about the appearances of Jesus before Annas and Caiaphas that night.

Why did they hold a court session after it was day?

Give an outline of verses 1-12.

#### Verses 13-16

For what purpose did Pilate now call the Jewish authorities before him?

What verdict did he render?

What did he propose to do?

#### Verses 18, 19

What peculiar custom is here mentioned?

What sort of criminal would the Jews likely want to be released?

Who and what sort of man did they now ask for?

Why was the situation embarrassing to Pilate?

What else occurred to disturb him?

#### Verses 20-23

What conflicting desires disturbed Pilate?

What efforts did Pilate make to get the Jews to accept his judgment?

Why would they not listen to reason?

#### Verses 24, 25

What judgment had Pilate delivered? What sentence did he give?

What effort did he make to declare his innocence?

How did the Jews respond?

What later complaint did they make touching that very point?

How could the preaching of the apostles bring the blood of Jesus upon them?

## Verses 32-34

What did Jesus say to some women on the way to the place of crucifixion?  
He spoke in view of what?  
Where was Jesus crucified?

Tell how some behaved while Jesus suffered.  
What was the prayer of Jesus?  
In what sense did they not know what they did?  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson XIII—March 30, 1941

## CHRIST'S COMMISSION

Luke 24: 36-53

36 And as they spake these things, he himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit.

38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do questionings arise in your heart?

39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having.

40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.

41 And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here anything to eat?

42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish.

43 And he took it, and ate before them.

44 And he said unto them, These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Mō'sēs, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me.

45 Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures; 46 And he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day;

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jê-ru'sâ-lēm.

48 Ye are witnesses of these things.

49 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.

50 And he led them out until they were over against Bêth'â-nÿ: and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven.

52 And they worshipped him, and returned to Jê-ru'sâ-lēm with great joy:

53 And were continually in the temple, blessing God.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you." (Luke 24: 49.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 52: 7-12.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|           |    |  |
|-----------|----|--|
| March 24. | M. | "He Is Risen" (Luke 24: 1-7)                         |
| March 25. | T. | The Supper at Emmaus (Luke 24: 30-35)                |
| March 26. | W. | First Appearance to the Apostles (Luke 24: 36-43)    |
| March 27. | T. | Explaining the Scriptures (Luke 24: 44-49)           |
| March 28. | F. | Meeting on the Mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28: 16-20) |
| March 29. | S. | Final Appearance to the Apostles (Acts 1: 4-8)       |
| March 30. | S. | The Ascension from Olivet (Luke 24: 50-53)           |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—The period of forty days between the resurrection and the ascension of Christ.

*Places.*—Jerusalem and its environs, including Mount Olivet; also Galilee, for Matthew's account of the commission was the condensing of a speech made on a mountain in Galilee.

*Persons.*—Jesus, his apostles, and other disciples. As the meeting on the mountain in Galilee was, so far as recorded, the only appointed meeting of the forty days, it must have been at that meeting that Jesus was seen by more than five hundred brethren; for there would not have been an accidental meeting of so many. Jesus had appointed that meeting in Galilee. (Matt. 26: 32; 28: 7, 10.) Of course, Jesus had appointed a time and a place, else they would not have known when or where to meet him. This appointment enabled many to see him.

*Lesson Links.*—The great commission, recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, contains in condensed form the whole scheme of human redemption. It was later fully revealed by the inspired men whom Jesus had chosen for that purpose. In the commission as recorded by Luke, Jesus tells us that this plan of salvation for all nations had been foretold by the prophets. This declaration by the Lord, together with the abundant testimony of the Lord's inspired writers, shows conclusively that the scheme of redemption set forth in the New Testament is not an emergency measure—not a plan of which the prophets said nothing. On Pentecost Peter referred to several prophecies as having their fulfillment on that day. Again Peter said, "Yea and all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days." (Acts 3: 24.) The notion that the prophets foretold salvation for the Gentiles only through restored Israel and in subserviency to Israel, as maintained by some, is emphatically contradicted by the plain teaching of the New Testament. At Antioch of Pisidia Paul said to the Jews, "It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 13: 46, 47.) Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles, and the gospel he preached had been promised afore through God's prophets in the Holy Scriptures. (Rom. 1: 1, 2.) This plan of righteousness which he preached was apart from the law, but witnessed by the law and the prophets; and this righteousness was through faith in Christ for all people, without distinction of race or nationality. For further study see Acts 26: 22-27; 1 Pet. 1: 10-12; also the Hebrew letter.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### The Disciples Frightened When Jesus Appeared (Verses 36, 37)

On the day that Jesus arose from the dead two of his disciples went out to a village named Emmaus. On the way they conversed about the matters that would be uppermost in the minds of all the disciples; and as they talked Jesus joined their company, but they

did not recognize him. When he questioned them about the subject matter of their talk, one of them, Cleopas, answering said unto him, "Dost thou alone sojourn in Jerusalem and not know the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things?" They repeated to him what had happened to Jesus of Nazareth, and added, "But we hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel. Yea and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things came to pass. Moreover certain women of our company amazed us, having been early at the tomb; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive." "And he said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!" Jesus then "interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." When they reached Emmaus, and while they were eating together, they recognized Jesus; he then vanished, and they quickly returned to Jerusalem, "and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." The two disciples then told of their experience on their journey to Emmaus. And while they were talking Jesus suddenly and mysteriously stood in their midst, and said, "Peace be unto you." They were not prepared for that; his appearance terrified and frightened them. They did not at once recognize him, and supposed they were seeing a spirit. None of these disciples were Sadducees, for Sadducees did not believe that there were such things as spirits.

### Jesus Identifies Himself to Them (Verses 38-40)

To calm them down so that they would be able to properly weigh evidence, Jesus asked them, "Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do questionings arise in your heart?" To convince them that it was their Lord, and not a spirit, he said, "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having." John informs us that the doors were shut for fear of the Jews when Jesus thus appeared in their midst. (John 20: 19, 20.) Because of this, some have concluded that Jesus was then in his glorified, spiritual form; but that does not fit in with what Jesus said to these disciples. He still had flesh and bones, and the nail wounds still showed in his hands and his feet. Aside from other possibilities, Jesus could have quietly entered by the door, for a lock would have been no barrier to him. It is certain that he appeared here in his natural body, and the wounds in his body were still there. He was not deceiving them into believing they were seeing what they did not really see. "He showed them his hands and his feet." These were the same hands and feet that had been nailed to the cross.

### They Disbelieved for Joy (Verses 41-43)

In view of the attitude of these disciples, why should anyone pick out Thomas as the doubting disciple? (John 20: 24, 25.) They were all doubters; and it is hardly fair to single one out, and call him "Doubting Thomas." It is a fine thing that none of them was so credulous as to believe without the strongest sort of evidence. Yet it does seem that these disciples would have quickly believed when Jesus gave them such strong evidence, especially since they had just reported to the two remaining disciples that "the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." The two disciples had also just reported that they had seen him. But let us not criticize them. They were so depressed and hopeless, and all at once things were happening that seemed too good to be true. It had stopped the ordinary functioning of their minds for a moment. Jesus relieved the tension by calling their minds back to commonplace things, "have ye here anything to eat?" When people get so carried away by excitement, or any emotion, that their reasoning faculty stops functioning, they need to be called back to some commonplace thing till their reason returns.

### "Thus It Is Written" (Verses 44-47)

It is possible, even likely, that we have only a condensed report of what Jesus said on this occasion. This is reported concerning his talk with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus: "And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." In this section of our lesson he again refers to what had been written concerning himself. "Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures." That is, he explained the scriptures of the prophets so that these disciples could understand them. If we had that discourse to the disciples on the way to Emmaus and the explanation he here gave, there would be no room left for speculating on the prophecies. But it seems that the Lord left the Bible, on purpose, so that the man who wanted to do so could find things to speculate about, and yet the man who wanted only the simple truth could find it. He here calls attention to certain specific things that had been written in the prophets: (1) "that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and (2) that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem." Notice carefully what had been written in the prophets that should begin to be preached from Jerusalem. Both repentance and remission of sins had been preached for long centuries, but not in the name of Christ. That had not yet begun, but would begin in Jerusalem. Christ would then be exalted, and pardon would then be offered in his name for the first time. It must be that Jesus had in mind such prophecies as Isa. 2: 2, 3; Mic. 4: 2, which see.

*Summing up the Commission.*—Matthew, Mark, and Luke vary in their reports of the Great Commission; this because they report what Jesus said on different occasions. Matthew reports what he said on the mountain in Galilee; Mark and Luke report what he said on other occasions in Jerusalem. Of course, each of them gives a condensed report. During the forty days he was with them after his resurrection, Jesus spoke to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. As he was drilling the apostles in what they were to preach, what the people were to do, and where they would begin their preaching, the matters reported in these accounts of the commission would be the subject matter of his speeches. To get all these matters before us, and to get the commission in full, we will have to consider each report, and then sum up what we learn from each report. In Matthew's report we have these items: Go—make disciples of (teach) all nations—baptizing the taught—into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. In that name is salvation. In Mark's report we have these items: Go—preach the gospel—believeth—baptized—saved. Preaching comes first, as it does in Matthew. Only believers were to be baptized; salvation comes after baptism. Luke has these items: Preach—repentance—remissions of sins—unto all nations—beginning from Jerusalem. To render a just verdict the jury must give proper weight to the testimony of all the witnesses, and out of that testimony make out a chain of evidence. To get the commission in full, we must put together the items given by the Lord's witnesses, and must arrange the items in such a way as not to change the order in which either writer places them. The following therefore must be the correct arrangement: Preach, or teach—belief (faith)—repentance—baptism—salvation, or remission of sins. In the first sermon under this commission Peter followed the order herein given, as will be seen by reading Acts 2.

### **“Ye Are Witnesses of These Things” (Verses 48, 49)**

In numerous places the apostles are referred to as the witnesses of Christ. They were witnesses not only of his resurrection, but of what he did and taught. That they were to be witnesses of what he taught them to say and do is the point emphasized in verse 48. But so much depended on their giving correct testimony, they were required to tarry in Jerusalem till they were endued with power from on high. This promise of the Father which he would send upon them was the baptism of the Holy Spirit. “And, being assembled together with them, he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye heard from me: for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence.” (Acts 1: 4, 5.) “But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and

Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1: 8.) They were therefore to begin preaching in the name of Christ at Jerusalem, when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit. That would give them the necessary power.

### Jesus Ascends to Heaven (Verses 50-53)

The words, "And he led them out until they were over against Bethany," show that the speech Luke had recorded was spoken in Jerusalem; at least, so it seems. Luke gives another record of the ascension in Acts 1: 9-11. The twelfth verse shows that Jesus ascended from Mount Olivet. Before he went away, he blessed them, and called on the Father to bless them. "And while they were looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven." (Acts 1: 9-11.)

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Let us quit referring to Thomas as "Doubting Thomas"; they all doubted. These disciples had their minds made up along different lines, and it takes strong evidence to turn people away from deep-set notions.

It is not difficult to establish from the teachings of the New Testament that the gospel of Christ is the scheme of human redemption foretold by the prophets. And that proposition established, leaves no room for any future scheme for man's salvation.

Pardon was first offered in the name of Christ at Jerusalem, and preaching was first done in his name in that city. In a kingdom all things are done in the name of the reigning monarch. That pardon was then offered in his name shows that he was then reigning—the Messiah.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Evidence that Jesus arose from the dead.

The gospel of Christ is the scheme of human redemption foretold by prophets.

The Great Commission.

Preaching under the Great Commission.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Discuss 1 Cor. 15: 1-8.  
Give some of the Lord's appearances, and the circumstances.

#### Verses 36, 37

Give a full account of the journey of the two disciples to Emmaus.  
What did they find and do when they returned to Jerusalem?  
What report did the assembled disciples make?  
What astonishing thing occurred?

**Verses 38-40**

How did Jesus identify himself to them?  
In what body did he appear to them?

**Verses 41-43**

Do you think Thomas was more doubting than the other disciples?  
Why did these not first believe when they saw the Lord?

**Verses 44-47**

What sort of speech did Jesus make to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus?  
Give the substance of verses 44-47.  
What two special things did he say had been written in the prophets?  
Can you think of some of the prophecies he may have had in mind?

When and where was repentance and remission of sins to begin to be preached in the name of Christ?  
Let members of the class in turn give the substance of each writer's report of the Great Commission.  
Show how we get the commission in full.

**Verses 48, 49**

Repeat verses 48 and 49.  
What charge did he give the apostles?  
Why could they not begin their work at once?

**Verses 50-53**

Repeat the substance of these verses.  
Give what is said in Acts 1: 9-11.  
From what point did Jesus ascend?  
Discuss the reflections.



## SECOND QUARTER

CHRISTIANITY REACHES OUT: STUDIES IN THE  
 ACTS, THE EPISTLES, AND THE REVELATION  
 (First Half of a Six Months' Course)

AIM: *Through a study of the Acts, the Epistles, and the Revelation, to learn the history of the early Church and the secret of its power in order the better to cooperate with God in building an effective Church today.*

## Lesson I—April 6, 1941

## CHRIST PROMISES POWER

Acts 1: 1-12

1 The former treatise I made, O Thê-ôph'î-lûs, concerning all that Jê'sûs began both to do and to teach.

2 Until the day in which he was received up, after that he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

3 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:

4 And, being assembled together with them, he charged them not to depart from Jê-ru'sâ-lêm, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, *said he*, ye heard from me:

5 For John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence.

6 They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Is'râ-êl?

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority.

8 But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jê-ru'sâ-lêm, and in all Jû-dæ'a and Sâ-mâ'ri-â, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

10 And while they were looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Who also said, Ye men of Gâl't-lêe, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jê'sûs, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven.

12 Then returned they unto Jê-ru'sâ-lêm from the mount called Ol'î-vêt, which is nigh unto Jê-ru'sâ-lêm, a sabbath day's journey off.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."* (Acts 1: 8.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 12: 1-6.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| March 31. M. | God's Promise Through Joel (Joel 2: 28-32)    |
| April 1. T.  | Christ's Promise to His Church (Acts 1: 1-12) |
| April 2. W.  | The Office of the Spirit (John 16: 7-15)      |
| April 3. T.  | Gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12: 1-11)         |
| April 4. F.  | Spiritual Refreshing (Isa. 44: 1-8)           |
| April 5. S.  | The Spirit of Truth (John 15: 20-27)          |
| March 31. M. | God's Promise Through Joel (Joel 2: 28-32)    |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—The period of forty days between the resurrection of Jesus and his ascension.

*Place.*—Jerusalem and its environs.

*Persons.*—Jesus and his disciples.

*Lesson Settings.*—There are some fundamental truths and facts that people must learn, and learn well; otherwise they never see the beauty and unity of the Bible, nor clearly understand the scheme of human redemption. The crucifixion of Jesus, his resurrection and ascension and exaltation to his throne in heaven, the giving of the Great Commission, the empowering of the apostles by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the first sermon under the Great Commission—these are matters of prime importance. Beginning with the second chapter of this book we have some of the deeds of the apostles and their helpers in carrying out the requirements of the Great Commission. In following them in their preaching we learn how people become children of God. We also learn about the church and its rapid growth; and we see the courage of these early disciples as they pressed on in the face of the bitterest sort of persecution. The book of Acts is the only absolutely reliable history of the early church. We can easily see that the book of Acts is more than a book of conversions.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

## Luke's Former Treatise (Verses 1, 2)

Luke began his Life of Christ by making some introductory remarks to Theophilus, which will bear repeating. "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus; that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed." The gospel according to Luke is the former treatise of verse one. This identifies Luke as the writer of both books. "The former treatise" was a record of "all that Jesus began both to do and to teach." That is a significant expression. The following paragraph is from B. W. Johnson's Introduction to the Acts of the Apostles: "It has been forcibly stated by Dean Howson that Luke declares in his preface that he had in his former treatise (the gospel) given account 'of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which he was taken up,' while in Acts, he reveals to the world what the same Jesus, having ascended into heaven, and being exalted to the right hand of God, continues 'to do and to teach,' not any longer within the narrow confines of Palestine, or during the few years of an earthly ministry, but from his royal throne in his imperial city, the heavenly Jerusalem; and what, there sitting in glory, he does and teaches, by the instrumentality of apostles, apostolic men, and apostolic churches, in all ages of the world." But Jesus gave the apostles commandment before he was received up. This commandment was, of course, the matter embraced in the Great Commission. This was studied in Lesson 13 of last quarter.

### **"The Things Concerning the Kingdom of God" (Verses 3-5)**

It does not seem that Jesus was with his disciples constantly during the forty days, as had been his custom before his crucifixion, but appeared to them on certain occasions; he "showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs"—"infallible proofs." "Showed himself alive" is a stronger expression than it might first appear to be. He showed himself to be alive—showed that he had been raised from the dead, and that by many infallible proofs. The King James rendering, "infallible proofs," is not too strong; for the word for proofs means just that. Jesus demonstrated to them beyond any possibility of doubt that he was alive again. They tell us that they saw him alive after he was buried, and they could not have been mistaken in the matter. Their sincerity is shown in that they gave their lives in support of what they preached. The time for the apostles to enter on the great work for which they had been chosen was drawing near. Hence, in the various appearances of the Lord during the forty days, he spoke to them the things concerning the kingdom of God. We would not conclude that he made the same speech at each appearance, but would dwell on one phase of the kingdom at one time and another at another time. The different reports of the Great Commission are condensed reports of some of these speeches. The duty of the apostles as preachers, or teachers, the duty of the people to whom they preached, the results of obedience, and the place and the occasion of their first preaching, all were set forth in these speeches of the forty days. They were especially charged to remain in Jerusalem till they received the promised Holy Spirit; "for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence." They would be completely overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit; they would be brought so completely under the power and influence of the Holy Spirit that it could be said that they were immersed in it. The term "baptized" is here used in a figurative sense; it expresses the abundance of the powers to be conferred upon the apostles.

### **"Ye Shall Be My Witnesses" (Verses 6-8)**

The "therefore" of verse 6 establishes a connection between the question the disciples asked and what had gone before. During his meetings with the disciples after his resurrection he had spoken to them of the things concerning the kingdom of God. It seems that the apostles had grown somewhat restless in waiting for the kingdom. The general tone of the question they asked reveals a degree of impatience, and also shows that they still had a wrong conception of the kingdom. "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" They did not say, "Lord, dost thou at this time set up your kingdom?" They were expecting their old kingdom to be restored to them. There is a mild rebuke in the answer Jesus gave them. "It is not for you to know"—not for them to know when the Father would carry out his own plans and purposes. Added to this mild rebuke, there is a word of comfort: "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you." This refers to the baptism of the Holy Spirit—the powers that this baptism would confer upon them. With this baptism of the Holy Spirit the kingdom would be fully inaugurated, and they would be empowered to carry on the

work committed to them. They would then know the nature of the kingdom, and that it had begun. Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost shows this, for he showed them in that sermon that Jesus had been exalted to his throne in heaven, where he would reign till he had subdued all enemies. From the limited ideas they later displayed, it does not seem that the import of the remainder of what Jesus said impressed them as it should have done. "Ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." They were to bear witness concerning his life, miracles, and resurrection. They were also to be witnesses of his teaching; for after giving the Great Commission he said to them, "Ye are witnesses of these things." (Luke 24: 46-48.) Again, "Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. And we are witnesses of these things." (Acts 5: 31, 32.) They were to give testimony first in Jerusalem, where Jesus, less than two months before, had been condemned and crucified. Pardon was first to be offered to those who had caused Jesus to be crucified. The first ones to be convinced that Jesus was the long-expected Messiah were the very ones who recently had yelled, "Crucify him, crucify him." Then the gospel was to be preached in the hills of Judea and then in Samaria; finally to all peoples and tongues.

### The Ascension to Heaven (Verse 9)

Before they realized that the conversation had ended, to their utter amazement, Jesus began to leave the ground. They could see him as he ascended, till he passed into a cloud, out of their sight. No man now can begin to imagine the feelings of these devoted followers of the Lord as they saw their beloved Master disappear from their view. When he was crucified, they lost hope; when he arose from the dead and they saw him alive, their hopes revived. Now he had gone from them; what next? Their emotions for the moment would prevent their remembering that he had told them that he would come again. (John 14: 3.) Later the Holy Spirit would bring these words to their memories. (John 14: 26.)

### Jesus Will Come Again (Verses 10, 11)

After Jesus disappeared, they were still looking steadfastly into heaven. Perhaps they were wondering if this were merely a momentary disappearance; if so, they wanted to see him as he reappeared. Then "two men stood by them in white apparel." Angels in the form of men were frequently called men. (Compare Gen. 18: 2, 16, 22; 19: 1; Matt. 28: 2, 3; Mark 16: 5; Luke 24: 4; John 20: 12.) Angels are messengers; God's angels are those intelligences whom he has sent with a message, or command, to people. These two angels came with a message to these astonished apostles, whom they addressed as men of Galilee. "Why stand ye looking into heaven?" Jesus was gone from them; gazing into heaven would accomplish nothing. These words of the angels would arrest their attention, so that they might give heed to what they were about to say. "This Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven." His coming would be visible, as was his going away; but the language cannot mean that he would come alone as he went, nor that his

bodily form would be the same. When Jesus comes again, he will come in his glory, "and all the angels with him." (Matt. 25: 31.) He did not go away in glory accompanied by all the angels. When he comes again, he will come "with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." (1 Thess. 4: 16.) No such demonstrations accompanied his going away. Again Paul speaks of what will occur "at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that believed." (2 Thess. 1: 7-10.) Other passages speak of his coming again, but none tell so vividly as these the glory of his coming. Hence, his coming again will not be just like his going away. But we should not worry about the manner of his coming; ours is to be ready when he comes.

### The Disciples Return to Jerusalem (Verse 12)

The ascension occurred near Bethany (Luke 24: 50, 51), but in this verse of our lesson Luke mentions the distance of "the mount called Olivet" from Jerusalem. The law of Moses did not specify any distance that a person might travel on the Sabbath, but the tradition of the elders limited the distance that a person might travel on the Sabbath to the distance of a little less than a mile. "On their return to Jerusalem the disciples must have passed Gethsemane. What new thoughts would crowd upon their minds as they gazed at the spot after the scene just witnessed!"—*Hackett*.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Concerning the book of Acts Bloomfield observes, "This important book forms the grand connecting link of the gospel with the epistles, being a sort of appendix to the former, and introduction to the latter, and is therefore indispensably necessary to a right understanding of both."

The mild rebuke Jesus gave his disciples about times and seasons should have weight now. They wanted to know when the kingdom would be restored to Israel. This erroneous idea about the kingdom is held by many today; and, strange to say, many of these who are now looking for the kingdom to be restored to the Jews, are constantly figuring on when it will be done. Even if they could prove that such an event is yet to be, they should not be searching to find out the times and the seasons when it will be done. The times and the seasons for the accomplishment of God's plans and purposes are kept within himself.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

- The things concerning the kingdom.
- The baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- The second coming of Christ.

## QUESTIONS

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

## Lesson Settings

Give time, place and persons.  
Give some fundamental truths necessary to be known.  
Give some idea as to the contents of Acts.

## Verses 1, 2

What was the former treatise, and to whom written?  
Give the introduction to the former treatise.  
What do you think is the significance of the phrase "began both to do and to teach"?  
What command had Jesus given the apostles?

## Verses 3-5

How long was the time between the resurrection and ascension of Jesus?  
Could the apostles have been mistaken as to his identity? Why not?

What did Jesus speak to them about during the forty days?  
Repeat and discuss verses 4 and 5.

## Verses 6-8

Discuss the question the disciples asked.  
What did Jesus say about times and seasons?  
Repeat and discuss verse 8.  
Of what were they to be witnesses?

## Verse 9

Repeat and discuss verse 9.

## Verses 10, 11

Tell about the two angels and what they said.  
Give some things that are to occur at the second coming of Christ.

## Verse 12

Where is the mount called Olivet?  
What was a Sabbath day's journey?  
On what authority did that regulation rest?  
Why did the disciples return to Jerusalem?  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson II—April 13, 1941

## CHRIST SHOWS HIMSELF ALIVE

Luke 24: 13-17, 25-35

13 And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Em-mā'ūs, which was threescore furlongs from Jē-ru'sā-lēm.

14 And they communed with each other of all these things which had happened.

15 And it came to pass, while they communed and questioned together, that Jē'sūs himself drew near, and went with them.

16 But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.

17 And he said unto them, What communications are these that ye have one with another, as ye walk? And they stood still, looking sad.

25 And he said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

26 Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?

27 And beginning from Mō'sēs and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they were going; and he made as though he would go further.

29 And they constrained him, saying, Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent. And he went in to abide with them.

30 And it came to pass, when he had sat down with them to meat, he took the bread and blessed; and breaking it he gave to them.

31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

32 And they said one to another, Was not our heart burning within us, while he spake to us in the way, while he opened to us the scriptures?

33 And they rose up that very hour, and returned to Jē-ru'sā-lēm, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Sī'mōn.

35 And they rehearsed the things that happened in the way, and how he was known of them in the breaking of the bread.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore.”  
(Rev. 1: 18.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rev. 1: 12-18.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|           |    |       |   |
|-----------|----|-------|---|
| April 7.  | M. | ..... | The Empty Tomb (Matt. 28: 1-6)            |
| April 8.  | T. | ..... | Peter Comes to the Tomb (Luke 24: 8-12)   |
| April 9.  | W. | ..... | On the Way to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13-17)     |
| April 10. | T. | ..... | The Sadness of Cleopas (Luke 24: 18-24)   |
| April 11. | F. | ..... | From Gloom to Joy (Luke 24: 25-35)        |
| April 12. | S. | ..... | Victory Over the Grave (1 Cor. 15: 50-58) |
| April 13. | S. | ..... | Delivered from Death (Psalm 16: 1-11)     |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—The period of forty days between the resurrection and the ascension of Christ.

*Places.*—Jerusalem, the road to Emmaus, and Emmaus.

*Persons.*—Jesus, the eleven apostles, and other disciples.

*Lesson Links.*—After Jesus was buried “the chief priests and the Pharisees were gathered together unto Pilate, saying, 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: . . . Pilate said unto them, Ye have a guard: go, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, the guard being with them.” (Matt. 27: 62-66.) This arrangement made it sure that his body was not stolen away. How this matter terminated is told in Matthew 28: 11-15, which see. And remember that Matthew wrote while many of those concerned in this matter were still living. Had Matthew not stated the facts, the enemies of Christ could have easily disproved what he said, and they would certainly have done so. Besides, the story the soldiers told bears falsehood on its face. Witnesses who could not have been mistaken gave us a different account—a sensible account. They saw him alive repeatedly after his body disappeared from the tomb.

Milligan, in *Resurrection of Our Lord*, as quoted in *Hasting's Bible Dictionary*, gives the following summary of the appearances of Jesus after his resurrection: “(1) To certain women as they returned from the sepulchre. (Matt. 28: 8-10.) (2) To Mary Magdalene on the same day. (John 20: 11-18.) (3) To Peter, on the day of the resurrection, in Jerusalem. (Luke 24: 34; 1 Cor. 15: 5.) (4) To two disciples on the same day on the way to Emmaus. (Luke 24: 13-35; cf. Mark 16: 12, 13.) (5) To the ten apostles on the same day in Jerusalem. (Mark 16: 14-18; Luke 24: 36-49; John 20: 19-22; 1 Cor. 15: 5.) (6) To the eleven apostles a week later in Jerusalem. (John 20: 26-29.) (7) To several disciples, including at least four apostles, at the Sea of Galilee. (John 21: 1-23.) (8) To five hundred brethren. (1 Cor. 15: 5; Matt. 28: 16-20.) (9) To James. (1 Cor. 15: 7.) (10) To the apostles at Jerusalem before the ascension. (Luke 24: 50-52; Acts 1: 3-8; Mark 16: 19.) St. Paul adds the appearance to himself on the way to Damascus. (1 Cor. 15: 8, 9.)”

There may be some confusion in the foregoing tabulation.

**COMMENTS ON THE LESSON****Two Disciples on the Way to Emmaus (Verses 13, 14)**

"That very day"—the day in which Jesus arose from the dead. From verse 1 we learn that this was the first day of the week, and from verses 22-24 we learn that it was the third day since Jesus was crucified. No one now knows where Emmaus, the village to which these two disciples were going, was located. Conjectures, where there are no clues at all, are worthless. The distance from Jerusalem is stated, but the direction from Jerusalem is not given. One of the two disciples was named Cleopas; some suppose that the other was Luke, but that is worthless conjecture. Bloomfield makes this peculiar statement: "The two persons here mentioned are, with reason, supposed to have been of the number of the apostles, or at least [of] the seventy disciples." Now, they could not have been apostles; for when they returned to Jerusalem, they "found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them." (Verse 33.) But Bloomfield did not adopt the supposition that he said had "been made with reason." "And they communed with each other of all these things which had happened." We cannot even imagine the excitement that prevailed among the disciples that day as reports came in about the missing body and about his having been seen alive by this one and that one. These two disciples had not heard many of the reports before they started on their journey to Emmaus. They themselves stated the extent of their knowledge as to the events of that day: "Moreover certain women of our company amazed us, having been early at the tomb; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. And certain of them that were with us went to the tomb, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not." (Verses 22-24.) No other topic of conversation could have held the attention of the disciples on that day. They would most likely recall some of the statements that Jesus made concerning his rising again the third day.

**Jesus Joins Their Company (Verses 15-17)**

It is more than likely that throngs of people were that day on their way home, after attending the Passover feast, for it does not seem that they were required to remain in Jerusalem during the week of the feast of unleavened bread. They would not return on the Sabbath, and so the first day of the week was their first opportunity to leave Jerusalem. So when Jesus drew near, and walked along with them, they would likely pay little attention to him. To them he was just one of the crowd returning from Jerusalem. There seems no need to suppose that a miracle was performed to keep them from recognizing him. It must have been near Emmaus that Jesus joined with them, and darkness may have begun to lessen visibility. But why bother? Any explanation is a mere guess. He enquired of them what they had been talking about? This, of course, was merely to draw them out. "And they stood still, looking sad." This would indicate that their emotions were such that they had not cared who he was, and thought of him only as a stranger. But his question astonished them. "Dost thou alone sojourn in Jerusalem and not know the things which are come to pass there in these days?" With all the confusion and uproar attending the trials and crucifixion

of Jesus it seemed incredible to Cleopas and his companion that anyone could have been in Jerusalem and not heard of such matters. But the words of Jesus while he was with them had not made much impression on these disciples. Sadly they said, "But we hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel." They hoped, but that hope had vanished; it died when Jesus was crucified. Their failure to believe what Jesus and the prophets had said brought to them much sorrow and despair.

### Slow of Heart to Believe the Prophets (Verses 25, 26)

The Common Version has, "O fools." Concerning the Greek word here translated "fools" in the Common Version and "foolish men" in the American Standard Version, Bloomfield says, "The word, indeed, denotes either one who has not, or who uses not the faculty of reason, or uses it not aright." A man of intelligence may at times fail to use his reasoning faculty as he should, and therefore do foolish things. These men had not properly used their reasoning powers; they, like other Jews, had used their ideas in figuring out how they wanted things to be instead of how the prophets said they would be. They had done foolishly. It will be seen that Jesus did not upbraid them for not believing what he had said, but what the prophets had said. "Slow of heart—backward—not easy to be persuaded of the truth, always giving way to doubtfulness and distrust. This very imperfection in them, is strong evidence of the truth of the doctrine which they afterwards believed, and proclaimed to the world. Had they not had the fullest assurance of these things, they never would have credited them; and it is no small honor to the new covenant scriptures, that such persons were chosen, first, to believe them; secondly, to proclaim them in the world; and, thirdly, to die on the evidence of these truths, the blessed influence of which they felt in their own hearts, and fully exemplified in their lives."—*Clark*. The common theory among the Jews was, that when the Messiah came, he would abide forever; and they thought their scriptures so taught. "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. The multitude therefore answered him, We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up?" (John 12: 32-34.) They had greatly mistaken the teaching of their scriptures. Isa. 53 should have taught them better. But Jesus taught them that it was necessary for the Son of man to die—to die for the sins of the world. This he had done; and later they would so understand. It was necessary that he also enter into his glory. This he would do when he ascended to heaven, and was exalted to his throne. (John 7: 37-39; 2: 36; Acts 5: 31; 1 Tim. 3: 16.)

### Jesus Interprets to Them the Prophets (Verse 27)

Only two disciples heard this wonderful speech, and it was delivered as they traveled along the road. "Beginning from Moses." It must be that he, like Stephen, referred to this statement of Moses: "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.) In the law of Moses there were also many types and shadows pointing to Christ and his church. The other

prophecies concerning Christ are too numerous to mention here. If we only had that sermon, how many questions it would settle! Yet in the wisdom of God it was never published. Adam Clark exclaims, "What a pity this discourse had not been preserved!" But is not that statement rather a reflection on the wisdom of God? We should not allow our feelings to run away with us.

### **"Their Eyes Were Opened, and They Knew Him"** (Verses 28-31)

None of us would like to think that Jesus was merely pretending when "he made as though he would go further." He doubtless would have gone on had they not given him such a warm invitation to abide with them—to spend the night with them. It was growing late—too late for him to risk going on to another village. Besides, they felt warmly toward him for the wonderful speech he had delivered to them. Evidently that speech filled them with new hope—enabled them to see the reason for all the things that had happened in Jerusalem. "He took the bread and blessed." By comparing Mark 14: 22 and Luke 22: 19 the student will see that to "bless" is to "give thanks." "Their eyes were opened." It is not necessary to conclude that any sort of miracle occurred. It is more likely that some movement, his giving thanks, his tone of voice, all contributed to their recognizing him. At this juncture he vanished out of their sight. Bloomfield says, "The best commentators are, however, agreed . . . that we are not to suppose that our Lord vanished as a spectre might be imagined to do." He concludes that the sense is, he suddenly or abruptly withdrew from their company.

### **They Return Immediately to Jerusalem (Verses 32-35)**

His speech to them on the way had stirred new hopes in their hearts. His words, as it were, burned in their hearts. And who has not, on hearing a stirring address, felt as these disciples did? Their invitation to Jesus to abide with them shows that they had aimed to remain in Emmaus overnight. And their invitation rather indicates that they lived there, else they would not have felt free to ask him to abide with them. But now they could not wait till morning to carry back to Jerusalem such wonderful news as they now had to report. The same hour they started on their return journey, likely leaving their unfinished meal. But when they returned to Jerusalem, they found the eleven apostles and some others gathered in a room with good news to report; and it seems that they reported first—"The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." Then the two disciples made their report. They told of the speech along the way, and how they came to recognize this supposed stranger as their beloved Lord. Let us try in our imagination to place ourselves in the same condition as these disciples, and see if we can catch the spirit of rejoicing that flowed through that meeting; the resurrection of Jesus should mean as much to us as to them.

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

In these lessons concerning the trials, crucifixion, resurrection, and appearances of Jesus there have been of necessity some repetitions; but it is well that there have been such repetitions of these important facts. We can hardly dwell on them too much.

No other facts of ancient history are so fully attested as the life, death, and resurrection of Christ; and if it were not for the moral issues involved, all men would accept the evidence as conclusive. His resurrection proved him to be the Christ, the Savior, and King. To accept this truth creates a feeling of moral obligation to serve him. The obligation is there, but people try to avoid it by refusing to believe. When a moral proposition involves an obligation to do different from what people want to do, they seek excuses for not believing. Unbelief therefore is due to a condition of heart, and not to a lack of evidence. (Matt. 13: 15; 2 Thess. 2: 8-11.)

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

How faith comes.

Why some do not believe.

The apostles as credible witnesses.

How they proved the sincerity of their witnessing.

## QUESTIONS

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

### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Tell how the chief priests and Pharisees sought to keep the body of Jesus from disappearing.  
Tell about the appearances of Jesus after he rose from the dead.

### Verses 13, 14

"That very day"—what day of the week?  
Tell about the two disciples and their journey.  
What did they know of the events of the day?

### Verses 15-17

Why would these two likely not pay much attention to Jesus when he joined them?  
Tell about the conversation with Jesus.  
What effect did the death of Christ have on their hopes, and why?

### Verses 25, 26

In what sense were these disciples foolish?  
"Slow of heart"—what does it mean? How did that condition of heart add to the effectiveness of their testimony?  
What common theory did the Jews hold about the Messiah? Give proof.  
When would Jesus enter into his glory? Give proof.

### Verse 27

Tell about the speech Jesus made to them.  
If we had that speech, what might it settle?

### Verses 28-31

Tell about their invitation to Jesus, and how he became known to them.  
What then happened?

### Verses 32-35

What then did they say and do?  
What indicates that these two disciples lived in Emmaus?  
Describe the scene on their return to Jerusalem.  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson III—April 20, 1941

## USING WITNESSING POWER

Acts 2: 1-4; 4: 8-20

1 And when the day of Pěn'tê-côst was now come, they were all together in one place.

2 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.

3 And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

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

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

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Is'râ-ël, that in the name of Jē'sūs Christ of Nāz'ā-rēth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in him doth this man stand here before you whole.

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

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

13 Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jē'sūs.

14 And seeing the man that was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves.

16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been wrought through them, is manifest to all that dwell in Jē-ru'sā-lēm; and we cannot deny it.

17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

18 And they called them, and charged them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jē'sūs.

19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye:

20 For we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—*"They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness."* (Acts 4: 31.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Matt. 10: 16-22.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS.**—

|           |    |  |
|-----------|----|--|
| April 14. | M. | Power to Witness (Acts 4: 5-12)            |
| April 15. | T. | Power to Be Bold (Acts 4: 13-20)           |
| April 16. | W. | Boldness by Faith (Dan. 3: 13-18)          |
| April 17. | T. | Not Ashamed of the Power (Rom. 1: 7-16)    |
| April 18. | F. | The Blessing of Trial (James 1: 12-18)     |
| April 19. | S. | The Reward of Faithfulness (Rev. 7: 13-17) |
| April 20. | S. | The Triumph of Faith (Rom. 10: 8-11)       |

## LESSON SETTINGS

**Time.**—Probably A.D. 31.

**Place.**—Jerusalem.

**Persons.**—In the first section of our lesson: The Holy Spirit and the apostles. In the second section: Peter, John, the lame man now healed; also "rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; and Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest." (Acts 4: 5, 6.) The John mentioned in this group was not the apostle John.

**Lesson Links.**—This lesson should be studied in the light of the facts learned in previous lessons. The apostles were the Lord's chosen witnesses. (Acts 1: 1, 2.) To be a competent witness a person must have personal knowledge—firsthand information—of the facts about which he is to testify. It should be recognized that a casual acquaintance may mistake one person for another. The Lord's witnesses could not be thus mistaken. They had been intimately associated with Jesus for a period of three and a half years, or more, before the crucifixion. And these men state emphatically that they saw him alive frequently after he was crucified and buried. Peter

affirms that they ate and drank with him. (Acts 10: 40, 41.) Others give like testimony. (Luke 24: 30, 41-43; John 21: 13.) They therefore could not have been mistaken as to his identity. Hence, they told the truth or else they told what they knew to be false. Some men may give false testimony, if they fear to tell the truth, or if they hope for gain in so doing; but against all such worldly considerations, and in the face of determined and bitter enemies, the Lord's witnesses testified before the people and their rulers, that they saw Jesus alive after he was killed and buried. They spoke out boldly when every earthly consideration favored their silence, and they sealed their testimony with their blood. As these men were to be witnesses of what Jesus did and taught, as well as of his resurrection, they needed infallible guidance. This had been promised them. "These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you. 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: 25, 26.) And as the time of his ascension drew near, Jesus said to them, "Ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence." (Acts 1: 5.) This would give them all the power needed for their work.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Pentecost (Verse 1)

The terms, "feast of weeks," in the Old Testament, and "Pentecost," in the New Testament, refer to the same feast. Pentecost was one of the three annual feasts of the Jews; that is, one of the three feasts established by Moses. Pentecost means fiftieth, and this feast was so called because the time of its observance was determined by counting fifty days from a designated time. The time when that count was to begin has been a matter of dispute. If the Hebrews had observed the feast every year from the time it was first observed under Moses, the time for its observance would never have been lost; but their religion so often fell into complete decay, their method of counting is no better than that of others. And yet the record seems plain enough. Some hold that the count began on the second day of the week of unleavened bread observed in connection with the Passover; but the count was to begin on the morrow after the Sabbath. The first day of the Passover week, though a holy day, is not called a Sabbath—certainly not the Sabbath. "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven sabbaths shall there be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days." (Lev. 23: 15, 16.) "Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: from the time thou beginnest to put the sickle to the standing grain shalt thou begin to number seven weeks." (Deut. 16: 9.) They therefore were to begin to count on the first day of the week following the beginning of the harvest. Seasons vary somewhat. Besides, the Hebrews had to add a month every two or three years to keep the balance between the calendar and the solar year. This also would offset the matter somewhat. They would not, therefore, always begin to put the sickle to the grain the same week of the first month. It seems, therefore, that the Passover had nothing to do with the beginning of the count; but it is plain that Pentecost did always come on the first day of the week, for it is plainly stated

that it was to be on the morrow after the seventh Sabbath. On this Pentecost the apostles were in Jerusalem as the Lord had commanded them, and they were all together in one place. By connecting this verse with the last verse of chapter 1, it will be seen that the pronoun "they" has apostles for its antecedent. It does not seem that any other disciples were present; certainly the multitude of sinners was not there.

### **"They Were All Filled with the Holy Spirit" (Verses 2-4)**

The apostles were waiting in Jerusalem for the power which Jesus had promised; they had known that they would not have to wait a long season, for Jesus had told them that they would be baptized in the Holy Spirit "not many days hence." Of course, they had no idea that a sound from heaven like the rushing of a mighty wind—a sound like the roar of a tornado—would accompany, or precede, the conferring of this power. That sound burst upon them suddenly, unexpectedly. Then there appeared unto them tongues—not tongues of fire, but tongues "like as of fire." This was not the baptism of fire spoken of in Matthew 3: 11. The connection there shows that the baptism of fire there referred to is the baptism of the wicked in fire. These tongues were distributed among the apostles; one sat upon each of them. They had the appearance of blazes of fire. Perhaps both the tongues and their resemblance of fire were both symbolical—the apostles would speak with tongues, and in so doing give light, as does a blaze of fire. The apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit. This is the promised baptism in the Holy Spirit. Because of their being so overwhelmed by its powers, it is called a baptism in the Holy Spirit. Certainly they were not merely sprinkled with a little of the powers of the Holy Spirit. When thus baptized in the Holy Spirit, they "began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." They began to speak in other tongues—in languages that they had never learned. The Holy Spirit used their vocal organs to speak words that they did not know. They did not speak in one language, and the people heard them in different languages—they spoke in other tongues.

### **The Rulers Question Peter and John (Acts 4: 8-10)**

This part of our lesson begins with the third chapter. Peter and John had healed a lame man, a well-known beggar, at the gate of the temple. This man, more than forty years old, never had walked. (Acts 3: 2; 4: 22.) This healing brought together a great throng of people. To this crowd Peter preached a sermon, proving Jesus to be the Christ. This, of course, infuriated the leaders, for they had caused Jesus to be put to death. "And as they spake unto the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being sore troubled because they taught the people, and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead." (Acts 4: 1.) Peter and John were arrested and kept in ward till the next day, when they were brought before the court that had condemned Jesus. This court pretended that it wanted information. "By what power, or in what name, have ye done this?" Peter, guided by the Holy Spirit, made a reply that put the court on the defensive. "If we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man." They were to be tried for doing a good deed to a helpless

man. If so, then know ye, and all the men of Israel, that this man who now stands before you, was made whole by the power of Jesus the Christ, whom ye crucified and whom God raised from the dead. It was a bold speech, but it really was not Peter speaking, but the Holy Spirit speaking through him. During his personal ministry Jesus, in sending out the twelve on their first preaching journey, said to them, "Yea and before governors and kings shall ye be brought for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you." (Matt. 10: 18-20.) Had this court been in a frame of mind to weigh the evidence, the miracle and Peter's speech would have convinced them; but instead of convincing them, the miracle and the speech stirred them to greater anger. They intended that no man should have more prominence than they.

### **No Other Name Wherein We Must Be Saved (Verses 11, 12)**

This court put themselves forward as the builders of God's works; nothing must be done except under their direction. They had proved themselves bunglesome builders, for the stone which they rejected as unfit for use, had now become the head of the corner. Not only so, but this Jesus whom they rejected and crucified was the only hope of salvation for that court and for all others—the only name in which people might be saved. How the world now needs to know that only in him can this world be saved from harrassing doubts, confusion, crimes, and bloodshed! "For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him." (John 3: 17.)

### **The Court Acknowledged the Miracle (Verses 13-17)**

The members of the court had, of course, known this man, who, as a helpless cripple, had been laid daily at the gate of the temple. Now he stands before them whole; they could not deny the miracle. They were also astonished at the boldness of Peter and John, whom they called ignorant and unlearned men—men who had not been educated in the great schools at Jerusalem. They were puzzled; they were, on trial, and did not know how to get out of the difficulty. They must take counsel among themselves, but they did not want Peter and John to know the situation bothered them. They sent them out of the court while the court decided what to do. They were determined not to be convinced by the miracle, nor by anything Peter and John might say. In taking counsel among themselves, they said, "What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been wrought through them, is manifest to all that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it." It does seem that with such an acknowledgment, they would have also accepted the preaching of Peter and John; but seemingly they were the more determined to put a stop to the whole matter; they thought they could do so by threatening Peter and John and commanding them to speak henceforth to no man in the name of Jesus the Christ. But how little they understood the faith, the zeal, and the courage of these men.

### The Reply of Peter and John (Verses 18-20)

"And they called them, and charged them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus." In this charge this high court recognized that in the name, or by the power, of Jesus the lame man had been healed. Reasonable men would have been convinced, and would have wanted to know more about the one whose name carried such healing power. It is hard for reasonable men to understand the blindness and perversity of these men. They did not want anything more said and done in the name of Jesus, and they were arrogant enough to think that a threat and a command from them would put a stop to it. And we can well imagine that this court was not used to having men talk back to them. But Peter and John did talk back, and again put the court on the defensive; and yet in so doing Peter and John appealed to their sense of right: "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye." It was putting the matter to them in a way they had not expected, but it had no effect on them. The concluding clause should weigh heavily on all professed Christians: "For we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard."

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Some people claim to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. If they had such baptism, they would have all the powers the apostles had. If not, why not? Think on this.

When the highest court in a nation becomes as perverse and murderous as was the Jewish Sanhedrin at the period of this and preceding lessons, that nation is in a desperate condition.

"We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard." How like the words of our Savior: "For I spake not from myself; but the Father that sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life eternal; the things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak." (John 12: 49, 50.) And he is our example.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

- The essential characteristics of a witness.
- The apostles as witnesses.
- Speaking as the Father commanded.
- The penalties for failure to speak God's word.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

- Give time, place and persons.
- Give the characteristics of a competent witness.
- How were the apostles specially qualified?
- How did they prove their sincerity?

#### Verse 1

- Discuss the Feast of Pentecost.
- Where were the apostles, and why?

#### Verses 2-4

- Describe what took place.
- Discuss especially the results of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

#### Acts 4: 8-10

- Give the incidents leading up to the arrest of Peter and John.
- Before whom were Peter and John brought?
- What question was asked them?
- Give their reply, and discuss the reply.
- Discuss Matt. 10: 18-20, and its present application.

## Verses 11, 12

Who were the builders to whom Peter referred?  
 What of the stone mentioned?  
 Discuss verse 12.  
 A failure to accept Jesus as the Savior and King, leads to what?

What about the situation that puzzled them?  
 What did they decide to do about it?

## Verses 18-20

What charge did they give Peter and John?  
 In giving this charge, how did they recognize the power of the name of Jesus?  
 Discuss the reply Peter and John made.  
 Discuss the reflections.

## Verses 13-17

How does it appear that the court felt itself to be on trial?

## Lesson IV—April 27, 1941

## THE EARLY CHURCH MEETING HUMAN NEEDS

Acts 4: 32-35; 6: 1-7

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

33 And with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jē'sūs; and great grace was upon them all.

34 For neither was there among them any that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

35 And laid them at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need.

1 Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grē'ciān Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

2 And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables.

3 Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

4 But we will continue stedfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word.

5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they chose Stē'phēn, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Phillip, and Prōch'ō-rūs, and Nī-cā'nōr, and Tī'mōn, and Pār'mē-nās, and Nic-ō-lā'ūs a proselyte of An'ti-ōch;

6 Whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them.

7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jē-ru'sā-lēm exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul." (Acts 4: 32.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 John 3: 13-18.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| April 21. M. | The Jerusalem Brotherhood (Acts 4: 32-35)   |
| April 22. T. | Organized Service (Acts 6: 1-7)             |
| April 23. W. | Mutual Helpfulness (Rom. 15: 1-9)           |
| April 24. T. | Forbearance and Helpfulness (Gal. 6: 1-10)  |
| April 25. F. | A Cheerful Service (2 Cor. 9: 1-8)          |
| April 26. S. | The Divine Helper (Isa. 41: 8-16)           |
| April 27. S. | Growth Through Generosity (Psalm 112: 1-10) |

## LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—A.D. 31 to 34. The church began its activities with its beginning. The incidents of Acts 6: 1-7 must have occurred about A.D. 34.

*Place.*—Jerusalem.

*Persons.*—The apostles, and all other members of the church in Jerusalem.

*Lesson Links.*—Human needs are many; there have always been needy people, and there will always be so long as people live on the earth. And there are never a sufficient number of benevolent minded people to care for those who really deserve assistance. The church has never been able to care for all the needy in various communities where it has an existence; and there are untold millions of sufferers where the church is not known. Because the church cannot relieve all human needs, its special duty is to its own members. "So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith." (Gal. 6: 10.) The church at Jerusalem in its early existence increased rapidly in numbers. In studying its liberality, we need to take into consideration certain conditions, which have been too often overlooked, and which were never present in another church. It is almost certain that many of the converts on Pentecost had come long distances to attend the feast. It was necessary that these remain in Jerusalem for a time under the teaching of the apostles. Had they returned to their homes immediately after becoming Christians, they most likely would have fallen away; they certainly would not have known how to defend themselves against temptation and their enemies. Properly taught and drilled, they would be able to plant the cause of Christ in their communities. Those from a distance, having no means of a livelihood in Jerusalem, would need help to enable them to remain under the teaching of the apostles. And be it said to the credit of these recently converted men, that they willingly shared their possessions with those who had no means of living.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### The First Church's Unity (Verse 32)

On the first day of its complete existence three thousand were added to it; and day by day others were added, till the number reached five thousand. (Acts 4: 4.) Many others continued to be added. It is remarkable and heartening that it could be said of so many thousands, that they were of one heart and one soul. This unity, together with their general conduct, gave them "favor with all the people." This, of course, does not refer to the attitude of the arrogant and jealous rulers. There is so much confusion and strife in so many churches, that it is refreshing to read of the unity of this church; but such unity is according to the will of God. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." (Psalm 133: 1.) "Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Cor. 1: 10.) Unity requires an effort; it requires a lot of forbearance. "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph. 4: 1-3.)

### **The Liberality of the Jerusalem Brethren (Verses 32-35)**

The economic affairs of this first church has been a matter of much discussion. Some have taken for granted that there was no individual ownership of property among these first converts; and some have thoughtlessly taught that this church tried the theory of communism as an experiment, but found it would not work, and went back to individual ownership of goods. If these inspired apostles were experimenting with such a vital question, how would we know how many other things the early Christians did as experiments? They were not experimenting; neither did they abandon the individual ownership of property. They were not experimenting with communism, nor practicing it. Each one felt that his property should be used for the common good. All that is said about the matter shows that we must so understand the statement that they "had all things common." It is immediately said, "And they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need." (Acts 2: 44, 45.) Their property was not all sold at once; but as the need arose, property was sold, and distribution made as needed. Weigh the significance of this statement of our present lesson: "And not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." They had possessions; but, like a devoted family, each member regarded his possessions as really belonging to the family. Each member retained title to his property till he sold it to supply some pressing need. "As many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them." It does not seem that there was any command that each one sell his property, or, if he sold it, to give all the proceeds. When Ananias and his wife Sapphira decided to gain some reputation for liberality by pretending that they were giving all they received in the sale of some property, while keeping back a part of the price, Peter said, "While it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power?" This language shows that they were not required to sell what they had, nor to give all the price when they did sell it. To gain a reputation for liberality, they lied to the Holy Spirit. (See Acts 5: 1-11.) Because of the unity and liberality of this church "great grace was upon them all." Everything about that church was a source of much encouragement to the apostles. "And with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." The conduct of that church gave weight to anything the apostles said; they could point to the church as an example of what faith in the Lord Jesus Christ would do for people. The preaching of the word falls without weight on people in a community where the church is in confusion and strife, or the members are selfish and ungodly.

### **Joseph Surnamed Barnabas (Verses 36, 37)**

These verses, though not in our printed text, really belong to our lesson. A surname was not then a family name; it was conferred on an individual because of some characteristic of his, or because of some incident closely connected with him. It was not passed on to his offspring. Apparently Joseph had great powers of exhortation; hence, the surname. He sold a field, "and brought the money and laid it at the apostles feet."

### **"There Arose a Murmuring" (Acts 6: 1)**

Apparently the first unpleasant thing in the Jerusalem church was the conduct of Ananias and Sapphira, but that was quickly disposed of. (Acts 5: 1-11.) It turned out rather to the furtherance of the gospel, for we read that "believers were the more added to the Lord, . . . both of men and women." And now the first murmuring, or complaining, so far as the record shows, began to disturb the peace of the church. Grecian Jews were Jews who had grown up in foreign countries where the Greek language was spoken, and were not acquainted with the language of the Jews as spoken in Palestine. It seems that those who were distributing the needed supplies did not understand the Greek language. If that is the correct assumption, it is easy to see how and why the Grecian widows would be neglected in the daily ministrations; it would not be easy for them to make their wants known. Whatever might have been the cause of the neglect, the Hebrews had charge of the ministrations.

### **The Apostles Give Directions (Verses 2-4)**

"The twelve." Some have disputed that the apostles had any right to proceed as they did in arranging for an apostle to take the place of Judas, and that therefore Matthias was not an apostle; but the language here settles the matter, for without him there would not have been twelve. The complaint of these Grecian Jews must have been made to the apostles, as if they felt that the apostles should themselves attend to the distribution of food among their number. It is a mistake to think that the apostles had been themselves distributing the food; for they said, "It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables." This shows that they had not been serving tables, and did not now aim to begin doing so. Again, verse 4: "But we will continue stedfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word." However, the apostles did not mean for the Grecian widows to be neglected. "Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." "This business"—this business about which complaint had been made, the business of caring for the Grecian widows. The needs of the Hebrew needy were already being supplied. Those who had been supplying their needs in a satisfactory way certainly were not dismissed from that service, and men of a foreign language given that work. Men of the Grecian language would be used to look after the Grecian widows. Men of high standing were to be selected for this work—"seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom." To be full of the Spirit does not necessarily mean that these men had to possess miraculous powers. If the apostles meant that the men to be selected must possess the miraculous powers of the Holy Spirit, there would have been no need to add that they must be full of wisdom; the Holy Spirit would have furnished the necessary wisdom. The men to be selected must be prudent, good men, men of good character and sense. "It was desirable that the whole multitude should understand the directions given, and that the inquiry should be made of all, of the character which the men had made; but the brethren were to do the selecting. The direction, 'Look ye out among you,' carries the idea of mutual inquiry, consultation, and agreement

among themselves as to the persons possessing the qualifications. It was not a nomination of candidates and electing by votes."—*Lipscomb*.

### The Men Selected (Verses 5, 6)

The plan set forth by the apostles pleased both the Hebrews and the Grecian Jews. And so the murmuring came to an end before it grew into a real disturbance. The seven men selected all had Greek names; only two of them, Stephen and Philip, were heard of after their appointment; that is, the record says nothing more of them. Stephen and Philip developed into great preachers. Perhaps it is proper and right to call these men deacons, but they certainly were not the first men performing such service; they were not the first deacons, as so many commentators say. They forget that a like service had been performed by others, who had neglected the Grecian widows. These others had been looking after the needs of the needy Hebrews, for no complaint of neglect had come from that source. And those who had been attending to the needs of the Hebrews would not be supplanted by the seven. A common-sense view of the situation will be helpful. The brethren selected the men for the work; the apostles appointed them, and prayed for God's blessings upon them in their work. It seems strange that anyone should think that prayer was a part of a ceremony of appointment to office. Hands were laid on them as a symbol of good will and fellowship, and not a ceremony of appointment to an office.

### The Number of Disciples Multiplied Exceedingly (Verse 7)

The church at Jerusalem started right; the apostles were the teachers, and the members "continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching." This means that they continued to be taught by the apostles. The church was one great school. All the members soon became able to teach others. Their unity and unselfishness gave their teaching force. It is no wonder, therefore, that the number of the disciples multiplied so rapidly. The great number of the priests that became obedient to the faith were most likely the lower order of priests, and not the chief priests. The chief priests were too determined in their enmity to Christianity to give attention to anything that might be said in defense of Jesus the Christ. They had closed their eyes and stopped their ears.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

The Jerusalem church attended to its own affairs. It did not try to run the government, nor all the clubs and educational institutions. It preached the gospel to sinners, and looked after the needs of its members. The members needed teaching—they received the needed teaching. The poor needed help—help was given them.

The amazing growth of the church was not due to government favors, for the government was against them. It does not seem that the church had any members of great worldly prominence. If so, they had no more attention than the poorest of members. If they had any great wealth, no record is made of it. They preached the gospel and lived it. Their preaching was not nullified by the conduct of ungodly members. Their preaching was not nullified by internal strife and confusion, as is so often done now. Will churches of today ever learn the secret of success?

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The need and the blessedness of unity.  
 The evils of division and strife.  
 What to do with those who cause division and strife.  
 The church at Jerusalem—a review.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place and persons.  
 Discuss human needs, and remedies.  
 To whom is the church under special obligations?  
 Discuss the reason for the need of some in the Jerusalem church.  
 Give special attention to discussing the need for teaching then and now.

#### Verse 32

Give account of the rapid growth of the Jerusalem church.  
 What is said of the unity of that church?  
 Discuss the question of unity.

#### Verses 32-35

How did the Jerusalem church care for its needy members?  
 Prove that it was not a system of communism.  
 Tell about Ananias and Sapphira.  
 What lesson does their liberality teach you?

#### Verses 36, 37

Tell about Joseph and his surname.

#### Acts 6: 1

Discuss the murmuring mentioned in this verse.

#### Verses 2-4

What evidence is there that the apostles themselves had not been distributing the food?  
 What plan did they set forth?  
 Whom were these seven to look after?  
 Give their qualifications.

#### Verses 5, 6

How was the apostles' plan received by all?  
 Who were selected?  
 Which later became prominent preachers?  
 Can you prove that these were not the first deacons in that church?

#### Verse 7

Discuss verse 7.  
 Discuss the reflections.

### Lesson V—May 4, 1941

## THE CHURCH ENLARGING ITS FELLOWSHIP

Acts 8: 1-8, 14-17, 25

1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jê-ru'sâ-lêm; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Jû-dæ'â and Sâ-mâ'ri-â, except the apostles.

2 And devout men buried Stê'phën, and made great lamentation over him.

3 But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison.

4 They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word.

5 And Philip went down to the city of Sâ-mâ'ri-â, and proclaimed unto them the Christ.

6 And the multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken by Philip, when they heard, and saw the signs which he did.

7 For from many of those that had unclean spirits, they came out, crying with a loud voice; and many that were palsied, and that were lame, were healed.

8 And there was much joy in that city.

14 Now when the apostles that were at Jê-ru'sâ-lêm heard that Sâ-mâ'ri-â had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit:

16 For as yet it was fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jê'sûs.

17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

25 They therefore, when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, returned to Jê-ru'sâ-lêm, and preached the gospel to many villages of the Sâ-mâr'i-tâns.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word.” (Acts 8: 4.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 42: 1-8.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|           |    |       |   |
|-----------|----|-------|---|
| April 28. | M. | ..... | The Church Enlarging Its Fellowship (Acts 8: 1-8) |
| April 29. | T. | ..... | Philip and the Ethiopian (Acts 8: 26-40)          |
| April 30. | W. | ..... | Foreigners Converted (Isa. 19: 18-25)             |
| May 1.    | T. | ..... | Gentiles Become Fellow Citizens (Eph. 2: 11-22)   |
| May 2.    | F. | ..... | Jonah's Widened Horizon (Jonah 3: 1-4)            |
| May 3.    | S. | ..... | Nineveh's Prompt Repentance (Jonah 3: 5-10)       |
| May 4.    | S. | ..... | Gentiles Follow the Gleam (Isa. 60: 1-9)          |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—About A.D. 35; probably as late as A.D. 37.

*Places.*—Jerusalem, the city of Samaria, and many villages of Samaria.

*Persons.*—The whole church in Jerusalem, including the apostles; also some devout Jews; many people of Samaria.

*Lesson Links.*—Immediately after the close of our last lesson we have this statement: “And Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people.” We find that Philip, another one of the seven, also is soon found performing many miracles. (Acts 8: 6, 7.) This lends force to the idea that the apostles laid hands on the seven to impart to them miraculous powers. The fact that it is not said of the others that they also performed miracles, does not prove that they did not have such powers. If an argument is made against their possessing such powers, on the silence of the scriptures, we could prove by that same silence that they did not do anything they were appointed to do! Stephen and Philip, and their miracle-working powers, are mentioned because of the great events with which they were connected. Different synagogues were built in Jerusalem for the accommodation of the Jews who had grown up in countries where they learned different languages. Even though Stephen was able to confirm his preaching by great wonders and signs, some of these foreign Jews entered into discussion with him. When he got the best of them in debates, they became angry, and resorted to falsehood and slander. They succeeded in stirring up opposition until Stephen was arrested and brought before the council, the Sanhedrin. Here, in pretended adherence to their religion, they set up false witnesses against him. Instead of entering into any direct defense of himself, Stephen gave a brief outline of the history of their nation. It must have been the attitude of his hearers that caused him to break off his narrative, and hurl this charge at the members of the high court: “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them that showed before of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers; ye who received the law as it

was ordained by angels, and kept it not." This so enraged them that they gnashed at him with their teeth. They did not wait to render formal judgment, but dragged him out of the city, and stoned him to death. The court had become like wild beasts. The scene was pitiful in the extreme; and yet Stephen's part was better than that of his murderers.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### The Church Scattered by Persecution (Verse 1)

"And Saul was consenting unto his death." This sentence should be a part of chapter seven, for it was Stephen's death to which Saul was consenting. At the stoning of Stephen "the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul." It is more than likely that Saul was one of the number whom Stephen had defeated in debates; for Stephen had argued with some from Cilicia, and Saul was from Tarsus in Cilicia. And Saul was not a man of inaction. And Saul consented to Stephen's death, but he could never put Stephen and his arguments out of his mind. And this fact infuriated him. The stoning of Stephen was the beginning of a great persecution. The opposition and the rage of the leaders had been growing, while the church was growing, and enjoying the rapid growth and their peace among themselves and with God. But their enemies now had, so to speak, their first taste of the blood of Christians; and, as if they were animals, it set them wild for more blood. The church was scattered. Evidently these enemies thought they would break up the only church there was, and stop the progress of this new religion—even destroy it. But they only succeeded in scattering the fire to flame up all over the land. Why were the apostles left in Jerusalem? As they were the leaders, it seems that nothing but the overruling power of God could have saved them; at least, so it seems. It is likely that many of those scattered abroad returned later; perhaps many of those whose homes were in the distant lands finally made their ways home, and there planted churches. They had been so thoroughly taught and so filled with zeal, that none of them could remain quiet, no matter where they might be.

### Saul Laid Waste the Church (Verses 2, 3)

The burial of Stephen had to be attended to; this was done, not by the members of the persecuted church, but by devout Jews, such as are mentioned in Acts 2: 5. These devout Jews knew that the stoning of Stephen was an inexcusable act of wickedness, and they registered their disapproval by giving Stephen an honorable burial and making great lamentation over him. This deed, as well as many occurrences during the personal ministry of Christ, shows that not all the common people were as wicked as their rulers. In contrast with the deeds of these devout Jews, the conduct of persecuting Saul is set forth. "But Saul laid waste the church." He searched the houses of Christians one after another, to see that no Christian escaped his fury. Nor did he conduct his victims to prison in a decent way, nor did he spare the women—"dragging men and women committed them to prison." Dragging, this shows how roughly he used them. He was "exceedingly mad against them." (Acts 26: 11.)

To such unreasoning cruelty does religious hatred and bigotry lead men. After Saul became a Christian, so long as he lived, the cruelty of these days of his young manhood haunted him.

### What the Scattered Christians Did (Verses 4-8)

From a human standpoint it would have seemed that any further effort on the part of these early disciples would be useless. A great church had been built up, but now it was scattered to the four winds, and the whole world seemed to be against them. What could they do when they were hunted down everywhere? But they did not remain quiet, and say, "What is the use of any further effort? If we build up another church, it too will be destroyed." This persecution sent out more missionaries than was ever sent at any other time from one place—more than any missionary society ever had in the field at any given time. "They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word." Their training under the effective teaching of the apostles enabled them to do this. Evidently the Lord had a hand in restraining the fury of the Jewish leaders a sufficient length of time for the church to receive this needed training. In preaching the word they preached the plan of salvation through Christ. No other sort of preaching would have been worth while, nor is it now. Among the number driven out from Jerusalem, was one of the seven who were chosen to see after the needs of the Grecian widows. In the providence of God Philip went first to the city of Samaria; the prejudice between the Samaritans and the Jews of Jerusalem and Judea was such that the Samaritans would more readily listen to a foreign Jew than to a Jew from Jerusalem. Philip "proclaimed unto them the Christ"—preached to them that the long-looked-for Messiah had already come, and that Jesus was that Messiah. First, it is said that those who were scattered abroad went about preaching the word, and here it is said that one of that number proclaimed to the Samaritans the Christ. In verse twelve we have a little fuller expression: "But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Hence, to preach the word, to proclaim Christ, and to preach the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, are one and the same thing. But it is not likely that any of those who were driven out of Jerusalem made any appointments to preach at certain places at certain hours, as the custom is now. Their preaching would be done to individuals and to families in their homes. In that sort of work the women could be very effective. The people knew that Philip's preaching was from God when they "saw the signs which he did." The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, but miracles wrought through the agency of man were signs of God's approval of his preaching, and they served to attract attention. "For from many of those that had unclean spirits, they came out, crying with a loud voice: and many that were palsied, and that were lame, were healed." Salvation through the obedience to what Philip preached brought joy to all; and the cures which he effected brought joy to the afflicted and to their families and friends. But our lesson will not be complete, unless we consider the verses following the first part of our printed text; for they tell more of the results of Philip's work in Samaria. "But there was a

certain man, Simon by name, who beforetime in the city used sorcery, and amazed the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is that power of God which is called Great . . . But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. And Simon also himself believed: and being baptized, he continued with Philip; and beholding signs and great miracles wrought, he was amazed." And had it not been that Simon later fell into a grievous sin, the genuineness of his conversion would have never been questioned. It is not said that Simon pretended to believe; the inspired writer said he believed. That settles it with anyone who believes a plain statement of God's word. In preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of the Lord Jesus, Philip would preach the whole scheme of human redemption.

### **Peter and John in Samaria (Verses 14-17)**

In view of the claim made by some that Peter was the Vicar of the Lord Jesus Christ, the supreme Pontiff, the absolute ruler of the church, the following statement by Luke is singular: "Now when the apostles that were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John." Peter had no more authority to command than did the other apostles. Their responsibility and authority were equal: They were the chosen witnesses for Christ, they were his ambassadors, and the ministers of the new covenant. As such, they felt responsible for the affairs of the church. Hence, they would look into the work of Philip at Samaria. As further evidence of their feeling of responsibility, when word came to them concerning the work at Antioch, they sent Barnabas to that city. (Acts 11: 19-25.) In dealing with men, the Lord takes into consideration racial prejudices. Jews and Samaritans did not like each other; so the Lord did not leave Samaria dependent upon the Jews for continued enlightenment. So when Peter and John came down, they prayed that Samaria might receive the Holy Spirit, evidently in a miraculous measure; "then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit." Previous to this the Holy Spirit had "fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus." This baptism into the name of the Lord Jesus had brought them into salvation. The Holy Spirit, therefore, was not conferred upon them to save them. Salvation was and is in the name of Christ, and they had been baptized into that name; and only in the name of Jesus Christ may salvation be found. (Acts 4: 12.) No part of the New Testament at this time had been written; hence these Samaritans needed this miraculous power of the Holy Spirit to enable them to carry on the work of the Lord.

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

When we see how the members of the Jerusalem church were scattered abroad, we can see why the Lord kept them in Jerusalem under the teaching of the apostles, at the same time, holding their enemies in check, till they were sufficiently taught to be of service wherever they went. Their conduct was not disappointing.

Herein is a great weakness in churches today. So many members move into places where there is no church, and they do not know

enough to try to start one. Perhaps they do not have enough of the word of God in them to make them want to do anything. If they feel like being quiet because of persecution, so did Jeremiah at times. "And if I say, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name, then there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain." (Jer. 20: 9.) The members of the Jerusalem church were having a delightful fellowship and were enjoying the teaching of the apostles. They felt as did Peter on the mount of transfiguration: "It is good for us to be here." It was natural for them to want to remain in such delightful surroundings. They were not sending out any preachers to establish churches elsewhere. They did not send Philip to Samaria, nor did they send anybody anywhere. They did not even talk about organizing a missionary society. But even so, the devil, through his agents, organized the most effective missionary society ever organized, and then put in operation the greatest missionary program ever inaugurated; but, like Nebuchadnezzar, he meant it not so.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

How the Lord overrules the wickedness of men and the plans of the devil.

What is most needed in the churches today?

What are the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Christ?

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Tell about Stephen's character and powers.  
Why different synagogues in Jerusalem?  
Tell about Stephen's discussions.  
What resulted from these discussions?

#### Verse 1

Who is named in connection with the stoning of Stephen?  
Do you think Saul could have kept out of those arguments with Stephen?  
Tell about the general persecution that arose.

#### Verses 2, 3

Who buried Stephen?  
Describe Saul's activities.

#### Verses 4-8

What would you have done had you been one of that number?  
What was the result of this persecution?  
Why were all of them able to preach where they went?  
Tell about the work of Philip.  
What did Philip preach?  
What noted man was at Samaria?  
Were any infants baptized in Samaria?

#### Verses 14-17

How came Peter and John to be in Samaria?  
Why did the apostles feel responsible for the way work was done?  
What did Peter and John do in Samaria, and why?

#### Verse 25

Read and discuss verse 25.  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson VI—May 11, 1941

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HOME REGARDING  
BEVERAGE ALCOHOL

Deut. 6: 4-7; Jer. 35: 5-10

4 Hear, O Is'râ-ël: Jê-hô'vâh our God is one Jê-hô'vâh:

5 And thou shalt love Jê-hô'vâh thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart;

7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

5 And I set before the sons of the house of the Rê'châb-îtes bowls full of wine, and cups; and I said unto them, Drink ye wine.

6 But they said, We will drink no wine; for Jôn'â-dâb the son of Rê'châb, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons, for ever:

7 Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any; but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land wherein ye sojourn.

8 And we have obeyed the voice of Jôn'â-dâb the son of Rê'châb, our father, in all that he charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, or our daughters;

9 Nor to build houses for us to dwell in; neither have we vineyard, nor field, nor seed:

10 But we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed, and done according to all that Jôn'â-dâb our father commanded us.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“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.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 78: 1-7.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| May 5. M.  | Parental Responsibility (Deut. 6: 4-9)             |
| May 6. T.  | A Temperate Family (Jer. 35: 1-11)                 |
| May 7. W.  | Rewards and Penalties (Jer. 35: 12-19)             |
| May 8. T.  | The Nazirites (Num. 6: 1-8)                        |
| May 9. F.  | Being a Good Example (1 Cor. 8: 4-13)              |
| May 10. S. | Warning Against Wrong Influence (Hab. 2: 15-20)    |
| May 11. S. | Teaching Children Obedience to God (Psalm 78: 1-7) |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—For Deuteronomy, according to Hales, 1609 B.C.; according to Usher, 1451 B.C. As the book of Deuteronomy is a rehearsal of the law, it was made near the close of the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. For Jeremiah, between the years 624 B.C. and 588 B.C. At the time of Jer. 35, Jehoiakim was king of Judah. Jehoiakim began to reign about 605 B.C., and reigned eleven years.

*Places.*—The land of Moab and Jerusalem.

*Persons.*—Jehovah, Moses, Jeremiah, the people of Israel, including the Rechabites.

*Lesson Links.*—When Jehovah called Israel out of Egypt, he said to them, “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.” (Ex. 19: 5, 6.) A full system of laws was given them, which applied to them in all the relations of life. And he gave them a goodly land. But the nation rebelled

against Jehovah and lapsed into idolatry so often that it really became a habit with them. Before Jeremiah's time, the Lord said through Isaiah, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Jehovah hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." (Isa. 1: 2, 3.) Even the rulers became corrupt. "Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; every one loveth bribes, and followeth after rewards." (Isa. 1: 23.) The whole trouble with the people of Israel was their lack of faith in Jehovah as their benefactor and supreme ruler. The law of Moses was given at Sinai, and repeated shortly before the death of Moses. The book of Deuteronomy is a record of this repetition. The law was then written down for their continuous guidance. To stimulate active obedience, the Lord promised rich blessings for their obedience, and told them of the punishment that would be visited upon them for disobedience. And their experience showed that these were not idle threats and promises. Nothing else is so powerful in helping people to ward off temptation as reverence for God and his word, and a feeling of personal responsibility in the sight of God.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### The First and Great Commandment (Verses 4-7)

The scribes and the Pharisees tried every way they could to entrap Jesus in his talk, but always failed. Finally they thought to test his knowledge of the law. A scribe said to him, "What commandment is the first of all?" He meant the first in importance. Jesus replied, "The first is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God, the Lord is one; 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." (Mark 12: 29, 30.) And this is quoted from this section of our lesson. It is the first and greatest command, because it sums up and includes all other commands. But the command is not fulfilled by sitting and feeling; it requires action, the obedience to all the other commands. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." (1 John 5: 3.) The language of the text of our lesson shows that we are to put all that we have and are into the keeping of that commandment. If a person does this, he will allow no evil desires or passions to lead him away from God. Without such effort to keep the commandments of God, a person is more or less adrift, with no sure anchorage. "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart." Men live out in their lives the thoughts and plans of their hearts. No man can live a clean, sober life, if his thoughts are vile and vulgar. Herein is where many good intentions go on the rocks—the person tries to improve his conduct on the same old stock of ideas. The word of God contains God's thoughts and plans. We need to fill our hearts so full of God's thoughts that they become our thoughts. "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." (Psalm 40: 8.) "The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide." (Psalm 37: 31.) "Thy word have I laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Psalm 119: 11.) Hence, the admonition: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." (Col. 3: 16.) The law of Moses required personal cleanliness; but the

Pharisees and scribes, at the time of the personal ministry of Jesus, put such stress on outward cleanliness, that they paid little attention, if any, to keeping the heart pure and clean. The following is selected from a list of descriptive terms Jesus applies to the scribes and the Pharisees: "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: 27, 28.) Drinking, carousing, and other evil deeds do not come from a clean heart, but from a heart of corruption. "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." (Mark 7: 21-23.) Therefore the only sure cure for all these evils is a clean and pure heart. Of course, policy and self-interest may keep some men from becoming drunkards; but to fill the heart with the word of God, and cultivate a deep feeling of personal responsibility to God, is the only sure preventive.

### Testing the Rechabites (Jer. 35: 5)

*The Background.*—This section of our lesson will not be so well understood unless we consider the background, or the setting. The ten tribes composing the northern kingdom had already been carried into captivity long years before Jeremiah's day, and this because they had forsaken Jehovah. Judah was growing worse day by day. They had also forsaken Jehovah. "For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." They had forsaken Jehovah, the source of all their blessings, and had gone after idols, which could bring no good. They had accepted Jehovah as their God, and had pledged themselves to obey him, and had failed.

*The Rechabites.*—It does not seem that the Rechabites were Israelites, but related to the Kenites. This group dwelt among the Jews, and hated idolatry. At the command of Jehovah, Jeremiah called them into the house of Jehovah, into one of the chambers. He was to teach the house of Judah a lesson by using these Rechabites as an example. They had adopted certain principles taught them by the founder of their order, or sect; could they be induced to go contrary to their principles? It seems that the order of the Rechabites had adhered faithfully to the principles taught them by Jonadab, the son of Rechab, for a period of about three hundred years. The Jews had never been continuously faithful to their principles for so long a period. The faithfulness of the Rechabites to the principles of their founder would now be used as a rebuke to the unfaithful Jews. "And I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites bowls full of wine, and cups; and I said unto them, Drink ye wine." With a lot of folks today that would have been a hazardous experiment!

### The Reply of the Rechabites (Verses 6-10)

In their reply, the Rechabites stated their principles, and their adherence to them. Their statement was clear and concise. And this was a contrast; for the Jews had neglected the principles laid

down by Jehovah, their founder, over such a long period of years, that very few of them knew the principles of their religion. But for that matter, the average church member today could not make a clear statement of the principles of his religion. By looking back to verse five it will be seen that Jeremiah did not tell the Rechabites that God had commanded them to drink wine. Had he done so, their regard for the word of Jehovah might have been greater than their regard for the precepts of their founder, and might have thus been induced to drink. He set the wine before them, as if it were a mere social affair. So they said, "We will drink no wine; for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons, for ever: neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any; but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land wherein ye sojourn." The following summary and comments are from Clark's Commentary: "Their whole religious and political institution consisted in obedience to three simple precepts, each of which has an appropriate spiritual meaning: (1) *Ye shall drink no wine.*—Ye shall preserve your bodies in temperance, shall use nothing that would deprive you of the exercise of your sober reason at any time; lest in such a time ye should do what might be prejudicial to yourselves, injurious to your neighbor, or dishonorable to your God. (2) *Neither shall ye build house.*—Ye shall not become residents in any place; ye shall not court earthly possessions; ye shall live free from ambition and from envy, that ye may be free from contention and strife. (3) *But . . . ye shall dwell in tents.*—Ye shall imitate your forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the rest of the patriarchs, *who dwelt in tents, being strangers and pilgrims* upon earth, looking for a heavenly country, and being determined to have nothing here that would indispose their minds toward that place of endless rest, or prevent them from passing through temporal things so as not to lose those that are eternal." "And we have obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, in all that he charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, or our daughters; nor to build houses for us to dwell in; neither have we vineyard, nor field, nor seed: but we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed, and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us." No group of people could be found who had been truer to the principles of their order. But our printed text does not complete the picture. To see the lesson which Jehovah meant to teach the Jews by the example of the Rechabites, read verses 12-17. "Then came the word of Jehovah unto Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: Go, and say to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith Jehovah. The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons, not to drink wine, are performed; and unto this day they drink none, for they obey their father's commandment. But I have spoken unto you, rising up early and speaking; and ye have not hearkened unto me." Jehovah had sent his prophets to warn his people, and to exhort them to turn from their evil way, but they had not obeyed. The example of the Rechabites was a severe rebuke to the people of Judah. The Rechabites had been faithful to the commands of their founder, but the men of Judah and Jerusalem had rebelled against the commandments of Jehovah, their founder, and had gone off

after idols. The demonstration was a severe rebuke to the faithless and ungrateful Jews. "Forasmuch as the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father which he commanded them, but this people hath not hearkened unto me; therefore thus saith Jehovah, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them; because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard; and I have called unto them, but they have not answered." They had not only failed to live up to the principles of their founder, but had entirely forsaken him.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

To write the word of Christ upon the heart, or, what is essentially the same, to let it dwell in us richly, means more than to commit it to memory. It is to make it the dominant factor in our thinking and in our plans and purposes.

To a great many people in this world, life is a slipshod affair, for they have adopted no definite principle by which to live. Such people never develop any sturdiness of character, and therefore fall an easy prey to any schemer that comes along.

The Rechabites were a remarkable clan. Some of their principles could not have been practiced by a whole nation. The remarkable thing is, they did not vary from a set course of life. Such strict adherence to definite principles develops firmness of character.

If we had the Rechabites in our midst today, we would not fear that any of them would be driving on the highway while intoxicated. And that reminds us that every drinking driver is a potential murderer.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly.

The Rechabites and the Jews—a contrast.

The Rechabites and church members—a contrast.

How best to promote sobriety.

### QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.

Quote and discuss Ex. 19: 5, 6.

Discuss Isa. 1: 2, 3.

#### Verses 4-7

What question did a scribe ask Jesus? What scripture did Jesus use for reply?

Why is it the first and greatest commandment of all?

What is it to love God?

Discuss verse 6—give scripture references.

On what did the Pharisees put stress? Give some of the charges Jesus made against them.

Why is a pure and clean heart important?

#### Jer. 35: 5

Describe the condition of the Jews when Jeremiah prophesied.

Who and what were the Rechabites?

How came Jeremiah to call them in and set wine before them?

#### Verses 6-10

What reply did they make to Jeremiah?

Discuss the items of their reply.

What had they done respecting their principles?

What lesson was their example intended to teach the Jews?

State the contrast between what the Rechabites had done and what the Jews had done.

What lesson does their example teach us?

Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson VII—May 18, 1941

BROADENING CHRISTIAN HORIZONS: SAUL'S  
CONVERSION

Acts 9: 1-16

1 But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest.

2 And asked of him letters to Dā-mās'cūs unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jē-ru'sā-lēm.

3 And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Dā-mās'cūs: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven:

4 And he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jē'sūs whom thou persecutest:

6 But rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

7 And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man.

8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Dā-mās'cūs.

9 And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink.

10 Now there was a certain disciple at Dā-mās'cūs, named An-ā-ni'ās; and the Lord said unto him in a vision, An-ā-ni'ās. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.

11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Jū'dās for one named Saul, a man of Tār'sūs; for behold, he prayeth;

12 And he hath seen a man named An-ā-ni'ās coming in, and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight.

13 But An-ā-ni'ās answered, Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how much evil he did to thy saints at Jē-ru'sā-lēm:

14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name.

15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gēn'tiles and kings, and the children of Is'rā-ēl:

16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."*  
(Acts 26: 19.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 6: 1-8.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| May 12. M. | Saul the Persecutor (Acts 9: 1-8)        |
| May 13. T. | Saul's Conversion (Acts 9: 9-16)         |
| May 14. W. | Paul's Testimony (Acts 22: 1-13)         |
| May 15. T. | Giving Up All for Christ (Phil. 3: 1-14) |
| May 16. F. | Saved Through Grace (Gal. 1: 11-17)      |
| May 17. S. | Appointed to Service (1 Tim. 1: 12-17)   |
| May 18. S. | The Riches of Grace (Eph. 2: 1-10)       |

## LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—A.D. 36 or 37.

Places.—Jerusalem, the road to Damascus, and Damascus. Saul was in Jerusalem when he secured letters of authority to go to Damascus.

Persons.—Saul, the Jewish authorities, the Lord, and Ananias. Certain men accompanied Saul on his journey to Damascus.

Lesson Links.—Our first introduction to Saul is at the stoning of Stephen. While the witnesses against Stephen stoned him, they

"laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul." (Acts 7: 58.) He then became the bitterest and most persistent persecutor the church had. Concerning his own activities in persecuting the church, he said, "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And this I also did in Jerusalem; and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death I gave my vote against them. And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities." (Acts 26: 9-11.) And yet in all these activities, he thought he was doing the right thing; his conscience approved what he did. Saul was a native of Tarsus in Cilicia. To the Jews who had sought to put him to death by mob violence, he said, "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, even as ye all are this day: and I persecuted this Way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women." (Acts 22: 3, 4.) On the points dividing the Pharisees and the Sadducees, he stood with the Pharisees. He was not a materialist either before or after his conversion to Christ. (Acts 23: 6-10.)

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### Saul's Commission to Damascus (Verses 1, 2)

A year or more must have intervened between the beginning of Saul's persecuting the church and the incidents of this lesson, for it required considerable time for all the persecutions he did. "Breathing threatening"—this is expressive of the greatest possible rage against the disciples of the Lord. He was exceedingly mad against them; so great was his rage that he did not spare the women, even handling them roughly—dragging them, and causing both men and women to be put to death. He was not content with the havoc and destruction he wrought in Jerusalem, but persecuted them unto foreign cities. And so it seems that the Roman authorities gave the Jewish authorities power over the Jews no matter where they went. Saul "went unto the high priest, and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues," that he might bring to Jerusalem to be punished any disciples, men or women, found in Damascus. In Acts 22: 5 he states that he received these letters from the high priest and the elders; in Acts 26: 10, that he had his authority from the chief priests. But this is all clear when we remember that the Sanhedrin, the high court of the Jews, was composed of the elders and the chief priests, with the high priests as the presiding officer. The Sanhedrin would authorize the letters, and the presiding officer, the high priest, would write the document and sign it. Damascus, probably the oldest city in the world, is about one hundred and forty miles from Jerusalem.

#### Jesus Appears to Saul on the Way (Verses 3-7)

In his speech to the Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 22: 1-16), and also in a speech before king Agrippa (Acts 26: 1-18), Paul gives accounts of this journey to Damascus and of his conversion to Christ Jesus. It will richly repay the student to compare diligently these accounts,

for in each account some facts are brought out more fully than in the others. As Saul drew nigh unto Damascus, "suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven." It was about noon (Acts 22: 6), and the light was "above the brightness of the sun" (Acts 26: 13). It is an intense light—a blinding light—that shines above the brightness of the noonday sun, a light more brilliant than we can imagine. Saul saw the Lord (1 Cor. 9: 1; 15: 8), and knew that he was some heavenly being, but did not know who it was, till he was told. And he still did not know who it was when he heard the voice, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Saul had nothing against Christians personally, but the very name of Jesus stirred him to unreasoning fury, and he transferred his anger to those who were followers of Jesus. He was trying to destroy from the earth the idea that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, and he was persecuting those who preached that doctrine; he was therefore persecuting Christ. Saul knew that the person whom he saw and who spoke to him was a heavenly being, but he did not know who it was; so he said, "Who art thou, Lord?" The Lord replied, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Saul saw the Lord, but did not know who it was; hence, faith does not come by sight, "So belief cometh of hearing." Saul had to depend on hearing, as all must do; his faith came by hearing the word of Christ. That he did believe what the Lord said is shown in his readiness to do what the Lord required. Without hesitation he said, "What shall I do, Lord?" In our haste to find the answer to this question, we may overlook some of the things this question implied on the part of Saul. Instead of doing right in persecuting the church, as he had so firmly thought, he now discovers that he had become, in so doing, the chief of sinners, and that his whole religious life was fundamentally wrong—a serious mistake. What all this meant to him as to his future, he had not the least idea; but he was willing to trust the future ordering of his life to him whom he had persecuted, and whom he had now found to be the long-expected Messiah. Hence, the question, "What shall I do, Lord?" The Lord did not in person tell him what to do, but said, "But rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." "What thou must do"—there are some things that a sinner must do. Saul would be told in Damascus what he must do. "And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man"; and yet Paul says, "And they that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me." To hear is sometimes used in the sense of to understand, and it is sometimes used in the sense of to give heed, or to obey. And it frequently happens that a person hears another's voice, but does not hear the words. On one occasion when God spoke to Jesus the people standing by thought it thundered. (John 12: 28, 29.) The people heard, and yet they did not hear; that is they heard the sound of the voice, but did not hear the words. And so it was with those who were with Saul.

### Saul Led into Damascus (Verses 8, 9)

Saul had not been "struck down," as some say; he had prostrated himself in the presence of him whom he recognized as a heavenly being. At the command of the Lord, he had risen from the earth, and found that he could not see. The light had blinded him—"I

could not see for the glory of that light." (Acts 22: 11.) He had to depend on those that were with him to lead him into Damascus. What a contrast is this with the way he had started out. Then he was a proud, self-sufficient man, "breathing threatening and slaughter," bent on destroying the very name of Jesus from the earth. Now see him—humble, penitent, blind, depending on others to lead him! And he had asked what to do, and the Lord had not told him—he would be told in Damascus. And we can imagine that Saul knew that he would be told by one of these very men whom he had intended to carry in chains back to Jerusalem. He had been blind spiritually all these years, and was now blind physically! and would not that, under the then present circumstances, remind him of his long standing spiritual blindness? We may not know why he was made blind physically, for the Lord could have prevented that; the others were not blinded. It may be that the Lord shut him up in himself, so to speak, so that he could meditate without being distracted by what he saw. And the Lord gave him three days to think things over; he had been so bitter against the Lord's cause that he needed time for readjustment. So intense were his emotions during these three days that he neither ate nor drank.

### **The Lord Sends Ananias to Saul (Verses 10-16)**

In Damascus there was a man named Ananias, one of the disciples whom Saul had aimed to carry back to Jerusalem to be punished. To this man the Lord appeared, saying, "Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth; and he hath seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight." Note how the Lord goes into details in telling about Saul, where he was, and what he was doing; and yet Ananias was afraid to go. He had heard of this persecuting Saul, and of his journeys into foreign cities to take disciples to Jerusalem to be punished. He naturally supposed that he had come to Damascus on the same mission; he was afraid of Saul. Now here is a peculiar situation. On the road Saul had asked the Lord what to do; the Lord had sent Saul into Damascus for the answer. Three days later no information had come. The man whom the Lord had selected to tell Saul what to do, did not want to go to Saul. On another occasion a man was commanded to preach to a city, and he did not want to go; but when the Lord and that fish got through with a little experimenting on Jonah, he went! And so did Ananias finally decide to go.

### **Saul Receives His Sight and Is Baptized (Verses 17-19)**

The lesson is not at all complete without these verses, though they are not in the printed text. For convenience they are here copied: "And Ananias departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized; and he took food and was strengthened." In all these matters we have only a brief account of what was said and done. Paul reports other things that

Ananias said to him. "The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth. For thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard." (Acts 22: 14, 15.) On this point Paul makes even a fuller statement of what was said to him. (Acts 26: 16-18.) He could not be a witness without seeing the Lord, but he must first become obedient to the Lord. Ananias was sent to him to tell him what to do; and also what he would be, and what he would suffer. Luke states that he was baptized. Paul in recounting his conversion reports Ananias as saying to him, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name." Jesus had told him that he would be told what he must do, and this is what he was told to do. The law of conversion is the same to all. People became Christians under the provisions of the Great Commission. What others had to do, Saul had to do. He believed in the Lord, and his actions show that he sincerely repented, and the record plainly states that he was baptized. People sometimes become confused in studying the conversions, because they fail to recognize the difference between things that are essential and things that are merely circumstances. What it takes to make a Christian of one, the same is necessary to make a Christian of others; but the circumstances connected with various conversions are rarely the same. There were circumstances connected with Saul's conversion that were never connected with any other conversion.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Saul had to give up much in becoming a follower of Christ. All his former friends became his enemies. For a person suddenly to discover that all his friends have turned to be his enemies is a tragic experience, an experience that none of us desire. He gave up his high standing in his nation, and it seems also that he lost all of his property. (Phil. 3: 2-9.) So lightly did he regard the sacrifices that he made, that he counted all he gave up as but refuse.

Saul was faithful to what he believed to be the will of God, even when he was so furiously persecuting the church. This trait commended him to God, and made of him a great apostle. He was not the kind of man to say, "It does not make any difference what a man believes, just so he is honest." Neither did he propose to let other folks alone, so long as he believed them to be in error. Because he loved the Lord and man, he was determined to fight everything that displeased the Lord and injured man.

Too often we are confused as to what conscience is. It is often represented as the moral judgment. That cannot be, for when Saul's judgment was entirely wrong, he had a good conscience. Besides, one person can exercise his moral judgment on the actions of another person; but his conscience is not in the least degree involved, unless he feels that in some way he is responsible for what the other does. It gives you pain, if you do what your moral judgment pronounces wrong, and it gives you a feeling of pleasure when you do what your moral judgment tells you is right. Your judgment may be wrong, for it is based on information, but conscience is not wrong.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Saul the persecutor.  
 Saul and his conscience.  
 What Saul gave up to be a Christian.  
 Paul the apostle.

## QUESTIONS

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

## Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
 Tell about our first introduction to Saul.  
 Tell about his persecuting Christians.

## Verses 1, 2

What phrase expresses Saul's rage?  
 To what extent did he persecute Christians?  
 Tell about his authority to make this journey to Damascus.

## Verses 3-7

Where do we find different accounts of Saul's conversion?  
 Tell about the Lord's appearing to him, and the conversation.  
 How was faith produced in Saul?

Can you give a reason as to why the Lord in person did not tell Saul what to do?

## Verses 8, 9

Why did Saul have to be led into Damascus?  
 Tell the difference between the way he entered Damascus and the way he had intended to enter.  
 Tell about his three days' experience in Damascus.

## Verses 10-16

Tell about the Lord's appearing to Ananias.

## Verses 17-19

Give the substance of these verses.  
 In addition to what Saul had to do, what else did Ananias tell him?  
 Give some idea of the difference between a law and the circumstances that may attend the carrying out of that law.  
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VIII—May 25, 1941

## BROADENING CHRISTIAN HORIZONS: PETER'S VISION

Acts 11: 5-18

5 I was in the city of Jōp'pā praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even unto me:

6 Upon which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw the fourfooted beasts of the earth and wild beasts and creeping things and birds of the heaven.

7 And I heard also a voice saying unto me, Rise, Peter; kill and eat.

8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath ever entered into my mouth.

9 But a voice answered the second time out of heaven, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common.

10 And this was done thrice: and all were drawn up again into heaven.

11 And behold, forthwith three men stood before the house in which we were, having been sent from Cæs-ā-rē'a unto me.

12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, making no distinction. And these six brethren also accompanied me; and we entered into the man's house:

13 And he told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, Send to Jōp'pā, and fetch Sī'mōn, whose surname is Peter;

14 Who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house.

15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on us at the beginning.

16 And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

17 If then God gave unto them the like gift as he did also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jē'sūs Christ, who was I, that I could withstand God?

18 And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gēn'tiles also hath God granted repentance unto life.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“And Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.” (Acts 10: 34.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 98.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|            |       |   |
|------------|-------|---|
| May 19. M. | ..... | Peter's Vision (Acts 11: 5-10)          |
| May 20. T. | ..... | The Gospel for All Men (Acts 11: 11-18) |
| May 21. W. | ..... | The Glorious Prophecy (Isa. 61: 1-9)    |
| May 22. T. | ..... | No Respector of Persons (Rom. 2: 1-11)  |
| May 23. F. | ..... | Spreading the Gospel (1 Thess. 1: 1-11) |
| May 24. S. | ..... | Salvation for All (Rom. 10: 11-21)      |
| May 25. S. | ..... | The Universal Kingdom (Psalm 72: 12-19) |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—About A.D. 40.

*Place.*—Jerusalem.

*Persons.*—Peter and the other apostles, and the brethren in Jerusalem, especially “they of the circumcision.”

*Lesson Links.*—All gospel preaching and all conversions to Christ came under the provisions of the Great Commission. All nations—the whole creation—were included in the requirements and promises of this commission. In the first sermon under this commission it was announced that the promise was to the Jews and to all that were afar off. Hence, the Gentiles were included in the provisions and promises of the Great Commission and in the statement made through Peter. Yet for a time it seems that no one grasped the world-wide reach of the gospel. This shows that inspired men sometimes failed to see the force of their own language or that of the Lord. The prophets searched their own prophecies. (1 Pet. 1: 10-12.) It seems, therefore, that apostles and prophets were mouthpieces for the Lord. In fact, the apostles spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance. Their revelations were of no more benefit to them than to others; they were not inspired for their own personal benefit. They profited by the revelations made through them just as uninspired people do. To say that God gave them understanding without any effort on their part is to say that God is a respecter of persons. We need not therefore be surprised if they sometimes failed to see the full significance of the revelations made through them. It required a number of miracles and supernatural interferences to convince Peter that the Gentiles had a right to the salvation offered in the gospel. These miracles were not performed on Peter's mind; he had to use his mind to see their significance. When he summed the whole matter up, he said, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him.” (Acts 10: 34, 35.) From all of this we can see that inspiration did not cultivate mental laziness.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Peter's Vision Related by Him (Verses 5, 6)

The present lesson is mainly a rehearsal of what is told in the tenth chapter. The student should therefore familiarize himself with all the matters related in that chapter; in fact, he must do so, if he would see the force of the lesson. He will also read the first four verses of the eleventh chapter. Peter's vision appeared to him

in Joppa. Cornelius lived at Cesarea. Luke describes Cornelius as "a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always." The men whom Cornelius sent to bring Peter to him spoke of Cornelius as "a centurion, a righteous man and one that feareth God, and well reported of by all the nation of the Jews." Personally he was clean and upright and generous. He had given up the idolatry common to the Romans, never praying to idols any more, but always his prayers were directed to God. With all these good points in his favor he was not a saved man, as we shall see. As the men whom Cornelius sent for Peter were nearing Joppa, Peter saw his vision while praying on the housetop. In a sheet let down from heaven, or something resembling a sheet, there were all manner of animals, creeping things, and birds. Of course there were some animals and birds which the law of Moses declared to be unclean for food. Peter had not yet got away from the requirements of the law of Moses; so when a voice said to him, "Kill and eat," he replied, "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean." Evidently Peter thought the Lord was merely testing him. The Lord's reply shows that all such distinctions as the law made had been abrogated. "What God hath cleansed, make not thou common." This language does not mean that God had saved Cornelius, but that he was a fit subject for the gospel. By this vision and what the men related about the angel that appeared to Cornelius, Peter learned that no man now was common and unclean, but that the gospel was for every man of all nations. Peter's visit to Cornelius resulted in the conversion of Cornelius, his kinsmen, and near friends. The report of this reached the brethren in Jerusalem, and created a stir. It appears that some of the brethren in Jerusalem were not so hidebound in their Jewish prejudices as were others. Many Jews then living in Jerusalem had grown up, or spent much time, in Gentile countries. These had got over some of their prejudices against the Gentiles. Some of these had become Christians. The Jews of Judea and Jerusalem would not eat with a Gentile, nor would they go into a Gentile home. Some of these had become Christians, and still retained their prejudices against the Gentiles. "And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them." It will be noticed that they did not mention the main point in Peter's visit to Cornelius. It would have seemed rather raw for them to say, "You carried the gospel to Gentiles, and now some of them are saved." Yet that was the real grounds of their fight against Peter—they did not want any Gentiles in the body to which they belonged. It will be noticed, that, in Peter's reply to them, he took no notice of the criticism they expressed, but gave attention to what he knew was their real objections. He begins his reply by telling of the vision which he saw in Joppa. He would give all the facts that made him know that he should go to the house of Cornelius, hoping that these facts would convince his critics that he was only obeying the Lord in what he did.

### God's Command versus Peter's Scruples (Verses 7-10)

Three times the vessel of all sorts of animals and birds was lowered, and three times the voice said, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat"; three times Peter refused to do so. He believed that the law of Moses was still binding on him respecting the distinction between clean and unclean animals, and his scruples in this matter triumphed over a direct voice from heaven.

### Three Men Come from Cornelius (Verse 11)

In a vision Cornelius had seen an angel coming in unto him. This angel said to him, "Thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call unto thee Simon, who is surnamed Peter." Specific directions were given as to how Peter might be found. A devout soldier and two household servants were sent for Peter. From the answer to Cornelius' prayer we learn the nature of his prayers; he was praying for more light. From Peter's speech at the house of Cornelius we learn that his hearers knew something of the life and teachings of Jesus. (Acts 10: 34-38.) Knowing as much as he did, Cornelius knew that there was more to be learned about Jesus of Nazareth. He was therefore praying for more light. While Peter was thinking on his vision, trying, no doubt, to fathom its meaning, the three men from Cornelius appeared at the house where Peter was lodging. Then there was another divine intervention.

### The Spirit Speaks to Peter (Verse 12)

"And while Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. But arise, and get thee down, and go with them, nothing doubting: for I have sent them." Peter says, "And the Spirit bade me go with them, making no distinction." He was to have no doubts as to whether he should go, for he was to make no distinction between Jews and Gentiles. To the three men he said, "I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?" The three men then told him about Cornelius and his vision. Peter evidently expected to be called to account for this visit, and so he prepared for that ordeal by taking six brethren from Joppa with him. So certain was he that he would need their support that he had them go with him when he returned to Jerusalem. Peter was not of the sort to say, "I know it is my duty to go to Cornelius; and if the brethren at Jerusalem do not take my word for it, they can make the most of it." No; to hedge as far as possible against any misunderstanding, he took witnesses with him to the house of Cornelius, and had them with him when his critics called him to account in Jerusalem.

### What Occurred at the House of Cornelius (Verses 13-15)

When Peter and the others came to the house of Cornelius he found that "Cornelius was waiting for them, having called together his kinsmen and his near friends." He told of his experience with the angel of his vision, and that the angel told him that Peter would tell him words whereby he and his house would be saved. Words save by showing a person his need of a Savior, and by also creating in his heart a desire to be saved, and then by showing him what to

do to be saved. Cornelius gave Peter this assurance: "Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord." That would be a unique experience for any man—to be assured that every one of his hearers aimed to do as he taught them. "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on us at the beginning." The six brethren who accompanied Peter to the house of Cornelius had not seen the vision which Peter saw, nor had they heard the voice of the Spirit commanding them to go. They must therefore have gone with some doubts as to the propriety of so doing; for it is said, "And they of the circumcision that believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God." It is plain, therefore, that these six brethren did not expect any divine demonstration in favor of the Gentiles. This evidence of divine approval convinced the six brethren who were with Peter, and they entered no objections to the baptizing of the Gentiles. They had been so thoroughly convinced that they came to Jerusalem as witnesses for Peter.

### **Peter's Critics Accept His Evidence (Verses 16-18)**

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit in such measure had not been common. Had it been so, Peter would not have gone back to Pentecost to find a similar occurrence; neither would he have said, "And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit." Several years had passed since the Holy Spirit fell on the apostles at the beginning of this new dispensation, and during the time many thousands had been converted to Christ; but Peter had to go back to that beginning to find anything like this outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the house of Cornelius. After presenting his evidence, showing the hand of God in everything that was done in connection with his visit to the house of Cornelius, Peter demands of his critics, "Who was I, that I could withstand God?" His whole speech was really a crushing criticism of those who criticized him. But these Jerusalem brethren were not blinded by prejudice, so that they would not listen to reason and weigh evidence. They were now fully convinced that Peter was only following God's leading, and that it was therefore right to preach the gospel to Gentiles. "And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life." And this does not mean that the Gentiles, at the time this was spoken, were merely on their way to spiritual life. Here, as in many other places, one condition of salvation is used to express the whole process of becoming saved. Later, in referring to these Gentile converts, Peter affirmed that God "made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith." (Acts 15: 9.) Later Peter informed the brethren to whom he wrote that they had purified their souls in obedience to the truth. (1 Pet. 1: 22.) Faith only does not purify the heart, nor does repentance only lead to life. In both cases one term is put for the whole process of conversion.

## SOME REFLECTIONS

God granted the Gentiles repentance unto life in the sense that he now gave them an opportunity to become children of God, and thus to enjoy spiritual life. They did the repenting.

Peter did not say to his critics, "You have a right to your opinion, and I have a right to mine. We are brethren; let us therefore have no discussion about the matter." No; he knew they were wrong, and proceeded to convince them.

Peter's language shows plainly that such outpouring of the Holy Spirit as occurred at the house of Cornelius was not a common thing. Had such outpourings been the common thing, Peter would have said, "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, as on all people converted under our preaching." As thousands had become Christians since Pentecost, it shows that such outpourings of the Spirit did not make Christians. They were saved by the words which Peter spoke.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The character of Cornelius.

Why send for Peter?

How words save people.

God makes no distinction between Jews and Gentiles.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place and persons.  
Show that God intended that all nations should have the gospel.  
What shows that inspired men did not always understand their own words?  
How did inspired men profit by their inspiration?  
Show that God is no respecter of persons.

#### Verses 5, 6

How does this lesson connect with the tenth chapter?  
What is said about the character of Cornelius?  
How came he to send for Peter?  
Tell about Peter's vision.  
What criticism did Peter meet with when he returned to Jerusalem?

#### Verses 7-10

Discuss these verses.

#### Verse 11

Discuss this verse.

#### Verse 12

Discuss this verse.  
How did Peter prepare to meet criticism?

#### Verses 13-15

Tell about the preparations Cornelius made for his expected visitors.  
What assurance did Cornelius give Peter?  
What occurred as Peter began to speak?  
What effect did this have on the six brethren with Peter?  
What evidence did they have that the Holy Spirit had fallen on the Gentiles?

#### Verses 16-18

What shows that such outpourings were not common?  
With what words did Peter close his reply to his critics?  
What did his critics then say?  
In what sense is repentance here used?  
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IX—June 1, 1941

**BROADENING CHRISTIAN HORIZONS: THE ANTIOCH MOVEMENT**

Acts 11: 19-30

19 They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stēphēn travelled as far as Phœ-ni'ci-ā, and Ćy'prūs, and An'ti-ōch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews.

20 But there were some of them, men of Ćy'prūs and Ćy-rē'nē, who, when they were come to An'ti-ōch, spake unto the Grēeks also, preaching the Lord Jē'sūs.

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord.

22 And the report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Jē-ru'sā-lēm: and they sent forth Bār'nā-bās as far as An'ti-ōch:

23 Who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord:

24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

25 And he went forth to Tār'sūs to seek for Saul;

26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto An'ti-ōch. And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the church, and taught much people; and that the disciples were called Chris'tiāns first in An'ti-ōch.

27 Now in these days there came down prophets from Jē-ru'sā-lēm unto An'ti-ōch.

28 And there stood up one of them named Āg'ā-būs, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine over all the world; which came to pass in the days of Clau'di-ūs.

29 And the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Jū-dæ'ā:

30 Which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Bār'nā-bās and Saul.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—*"For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."* (Rom. 1: 16.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—1 Thess. 5: 12-22.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS.**—

|         |    |       |  |
|---------|----|-------|--|
| May 26. | M. | ..... | The Gospel in Antioch (Acts 11: 19-26)   |
| May 27. | T. | ..... | A Ministering Church (Acts 11: 27-30)    |
| May 28. | W. | ..... | A Missionary Tour (Matt. 10: 1, 5-11)    |
| May 29. | T. | ..... | Persecution Overruled (Phil. 1: 12-17)   |
| May 30. | F. | ..... | God, the Source of Power (1 Cor. 2: 1-5) |
| May 31. | S. | ..... | A Growing Church (Eph. 4: 11-16)         |
| June 1. | S. | ..... | A Song of Thanksgiving (Psalm 122)       |

**LESSON SETTINGS**

**Time.**—From A.D. 34 or 35 to A.D. 43 or 44. It will be noticed that this lesson begins with the scattering of the church from Jerusalem by the persecution.

**Places.**—Phoenicia and Antioch. Jerusalem and Tarsus also come into notice in the lesson. The Antioch of our lesson is Antioch of Syria, a city more than three hundred years old at the time of our lesson, and the third city in importance in the Roman empire. It was situated on the Orontes River, about three hundred miles from Jerusalem, and about fourteen miles from the sea.

**Persons.**—Some of the disciples driven out of Jerusalem by the persecution, the church at Jerusalem, Barnabas, Saul of Tarsus, Agabus, and the disciples at Antioch.

*Lesson Links.*—When we consider human nature and the tenacity with which people hold to long established beliefs and customs, we should not be astonished at the way the early Christians among the Jews of Jerusalem and Judea felt toward the Gentiles. That attitude had been for years and years a part of their culture; they had grown more aloof from the Gentiles than the law of Moses required. The Jews of Galilee were about as exclusive as were those of Jerusalem and Judea. Though Jesus had commanded the apostles to preach the gospel to every creature, among all nations, they did not at first grasp the import of his language. Let us not get the idea that they were not commanded to preach to the Gentiles before Peter was called to preach to Cornelius. Bloomfield makes the strange assertion that the gospel could not have been preached to Gentiles before Peter's vision and his preaching to Cornelius "because there hitherto had been no authority to do so." Apparently he did not have in mind the Great Commission, for it gave all the authority needed to preach to anyone. Peter's vision and the words of the Holy Spirit on that occasion served, not as authority to preach, but as a means of overcoming his prejudices so that he would preach. However, the Lord had a hand in all these movements, and the gospel was preached to the Gentiles when he was ready for it to be done. For a time the united efforts of the apostles were needed in Jerusalem. They were reaping a great harvest there, and were teaching and establishing the new converts in the faith—all of this was in preparation for the great work that followed. God held the wrath of the enemies in check till this was done, so that when the persecution began in such fierce wrath a great host of effective preachers—not mere ignorant church members—went about all countries preaching the word. The published results were great; and yet the preaching of only a few is reported, and a very small per cent of what they did. The record shows that churches were planted throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria. (Acts 9: 31.)

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Some Preached to Jews Only (Verse 19)

Luke now begins to write of the developments that centered in Antioch. To get the matter properly before the reader he goes back to the scattering of the disciples from Jerusalem by the persecution that began with the stoning of Stephen. The disciples here mentioned made a northward journey, and of course preached as they had opportunity; and it is almost certain that they had to make the opportunity. Those who preached in Phoenicia preached only to Jews. It would seem likely that these were from Jerusalem and Judea; if so, they had no need to hurry to any certain place, for they were merely keeping away from Jerusalem till the fierce persecution should die down. Later we find disciples in some of the places they passed through on their northward journey. (Acts 21: 3-7.) As those who preached in Phoenicia preached to none but Jews, it must have been done soon after they were driven from Jerusalem. At least, if it was done after Peter preached to Cornelius, they had not heard of that preaching.

### The Gospel Preached in Antioch (Verses 20, 21)

Some of those who traveled northward went as far as Antioch, men of Cyprus and Cyrene (strictly, Cyprians and Cyrenians). Having been brought up in Gentile surroundings, they would not be so prejudiced against the Gentiles. Antioch had many Jews in it, because the city granted to all Jews the privileges of citizenship. Of course these Cyprians and Cyrenians would preach to these Jews, but they spoke to the Greeks also. The King James Version has Grecians instead of Greeks. On this point there has been an endless amount of controversy, but Greeks seems to be the correct word. Grecians were Jews who spoke the Greek language. Since many of these Grecians were in the church at Jerusalem, it does not seem that there would have been any point in Luke's saying here that the gospel was preached to the Grecian Jews also. But the contrast is plain. Some preached to the Jews only, but others preached to the Greeks also. "The hand of the Lord was with them." Through the ministry of these preachers the Lord performed miracles as signs of God's presence with them; he was thus confirming their word. "And a great number that believed turned unto the Lord." This was something like the early preaching in Jerusalem. It is interesting to note that those that believed turned to the Lord. They believed before they turned to the Lord. Hence, if they were saved the moment they believed, they were saved before they turned to the Lord; but pardon comes after turning. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." (Isa. 55: 7.)

### The Jerusalem Church Sends Barnabas to Antioch (Verses 22-24)

The apostles were keeping an eye on the work wherever they could; "they sent forth Barnabas as far as Antioch." Or, as Barnabas was an exhorter, perhaps they sent him along the route these preachers had gone, so that he might the more firmly establish the new converts in the faith. Grace is favor; Barnabas saw the favor of God manifested in the salvation of the Greeks, and he was glad—glad to see Greeks as well as Jews enjoying the blessings of salvation. "And he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." A person must have a definite purpose, if he would accomplish anything worth while along any line. When there are so many forces and temptations working against the Christian, he must have a wholehearted purpose to hold on. Not simply attach one's self to the Lord in a halfhearted way, but cleave to the Lord—remain steadfastly with him. "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." (Rom. 12: 9.) "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. 15: 58.) Barnabas was a warmhearted, emotional, and generous man. His name was Joseph, but the apostles surnamed him Barnabas, "Son of exhortation." (Acts 4: 36, 37.) In addition to being righteous, a good man is generous. Barnabas "was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith." He was therefore a valuable helper in the work at Antioch; as a result of his help in that work, "much people was added unto the Lord."

## The Disciples Called Christians First at Antioch (Verses 25, 26)

When Saul, after his conversion, returned to Jerusalem, the brethren were afraid of him. "But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus." Saul was soon found disputing with the Grecian Jews, perhaps the very ones he had assisted in their disputes with Stephen. When the brethren learned that these Jews were seeking to kill Saul, "they brought him down to Cesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus." (Acts 9: 26-30.) Of course Saul was not inactive at Tarsus. When therefore Barnabas decided that Saul would be a valuable man for the great work that had opened up at Antioch, "he went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul." This shows that he did not know exactly where in the regions of Tarsus he would find Saul, for he knew that Saul would be busy preaching the gospel. "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch." For a whole year they labored together in that city; nor were they the only prophets and teachers in that city. (Acts 13: 1.) A great and determined effort was being made to build up a great church in this great center. A great church in such a radiating center would come in touch with more people than any church could possibly do in a remote corner. People from all parts of the country were constantly coming to, or passing through, Antioch. An active church there would be indeed as a city set on a hill; it might not be any better than a church in some obscure place, but it would certainly exert a wider influence. Who conferred the name Christians on the disciples? On this point there has been much controversy, or, rather, many dogmatic assertions. It seems strange that some seem so anxious to make it appear that the name was conferred by the enemies, for the record does not say so. In all this controversy, it seems that one decisive point has been overlooked. Look at the matter from this standpoint: Here is a group of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth; these disciples claimed that Jesus was the Christ. Their enemies, both Jews and Greeks, knew the meaning of the name Christ. Now, to call a follower of Jesus a Christian was the same as acknowledging that Jesus was the Christ; this no enemy would do. This point is worth considering.

## A Great Famine Prophesied (Verses 27, 28)

A prophet is one who speaks for another; God's prophets were his mouthpieces—through them he spoke to people. It might have been that God was speaking through the prophet concerning the way they should live, or rebuking them for the way they were living, or revealing to them events to come. If a man was God's inspired spokesman, he was a prophet. In the course of the year in which Barnabas and Saul were preaching and teaching in Antioch, certain prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of these prophets, named Agabus, told of a great famine which was to come. Luke informs us that this famine did come in the days of Claudius. We are told that four famines occurred during his reign. This one was likely to be the most severe in Judea; at least, the disciples at Antioch thought the disciples in Judea would be the most needy.

**Antioch Sends Relief to Brethren in Judea (Verses 29, 30)**

The disciples determined to send relief to the brethren in Judea. This was voluntary on the part of everyone—everyone determined to send according to his ability. No one determined what another should give. Voluntary giving to any worthy cause is a powerful factor in developing Christian character, but giving to make a show makes hypocrites. How all these contributions were collected we are not told. Later, for a similar cause, Paul gave this injunction: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come." (1 Cor. 16: 1, 2.) This convenient plan was perhaps followed at Antioch. Barnabas and Saul were selected to send to Jerusalem with the Antioch contributions. As the elders were the overseers in the church, the contributions were sent to them. They would, of course, have ministers, or deacons, to assist them in distributing the gifts to those most needy. The incident shows that the elders of the church have charge of the funds of the church. As this was done under the guidance of inspired men, it becomes an example for us. That example should be respected.

**SOME REFLECTIONS**

If a man loves the word of God and is full of it, persecution will not stop his mouth.

People sometimes say that this plan or that plan will not work. Certainly not; no plan will work. But people may work a plan, or work according to a plan, or they may work without any prearranged plan. A plan is not as necessary as a purpose.

One preacher can do very little toward establishing a church in a great city; it is perhaps harder now than ever. We have seen it tried. It would be better to take the work at Antioch as an example—notice the number of workers that concentrated their efforts on that city. They got results. Paul generally had a group of helpers with him. Together they did work in cities, where one man would have failed, or practically so. Ignoring this divine example, and putting one man in a city without real help, we have wasted much effort.

**TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION**

The church at Antioch.

The name Christian.

Helping the needy.

**QUESTIONS**

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

**Lesson Settings**

Give time, places, and persons.  
Give some facts about Antioch.  
Discuss how custom and prejudice hinders seeing the truth.  
Where is the authority for preaching the gospel to all nations?

**Verse 19**

Give facts of this verse.  
Tell about Phoenicia.

**Verses 20, 21**

Tell about the preaching at Antioch. "The hand of the Lord was with them"—what does this mean?  
What was the result of this preaching?  
When does pardon come?

## Verses 22-24

What action did the church at Jerusalem take?  
Tell about Barnabas and his work at Antioch.

## Verses 25, 26

How came Saul in Tarsus?  
Tell about the work he and Barnabas did in Antioch.

Discuss the name Christian.

## Verses 27, 28

Tell about the prophets from Jerusalem, and what Agabus said.

## Verses 29, 30

Discuss these verses, and the example they are to us.  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson X—June 8, 1941

## BEGINNING OF WORLD MISSIONS

Acts 12: 25 to 13: 12

25 And Bär'nā-bās and Saul returned from Jê-ru'sā-lēm, when they had fulfilled their ministrations, taking with them John whose surname was Mark.

1 Now there were at Ān'tī-ōch, in the church that was *there*, prophets and teachers, Bär'nā-bās, and Sým'ē-ōn that was called NĪ'gēr, and Lū'cius of Cŷ-rē'nē, and Mān'ā-ēn the foster-brother of Hēr'ōd the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Bär'nā-bās and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Sē-leū'ci-ā; and from thence they sailed to Cŷ'prūs.

5 And when they were at Sāl'ā-mīs, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; and they had also John as their attendant.

6 And when they had gone through the whole island unto Pā'phōs, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bār-Jē'sūs;

7 Who was with the proconsul, Sēr'gī-ūs Pau'lūs, a man of understanding. The same called unto him Bär'nā-bās and Saul, and sought to hear the word of God.

8 But Ēl'ŷ-mās the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn aside the proconsul from the faith.

9 But Saul, who is also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fastened his eyes on him,

10 And said, O full of all guile and all villany, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

12 Then the proconsul, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation.”* (Mark 16: 15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 72: 6-13.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| June 2. M. | Christ's Commission (Matt. 28: 16-20)      |
| June 3. T. | The Field Is the World (Acts 1: 6-8)       |
| June 4. W. | A Missionary Church (Acts 12: 25 to 13: 3) |
| June 5. T. | The Mission to Cyprus (Acts 13: 4-12)      |
| June 6. F. | A Prophet's Commission (Isa. 6: 1-8)       |
| June 7. S. | Spreading the Gospel (Rom. 15: 15-21)      |
| June 8. S. | The Lord's Promise (Isa. 42: 6-10)         |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—About A.D. 45.

*Places.*—Antioch of Syria, and the Island of Cyprus.

*Persons.*—Barnabas, Saul, the prophets mentioned in Acts 13: 1, the Holy Spirit, the sorcerer Bar-Jesus, and Sergius Paulus.

*Lesson Links.*—All gospel preaching has been done under the commission which Christ delivered to his apostles during the forty days between his resurrection and ascension. No Bible student can become too familiar with the provisions of that commission. For this reason and for a starting point for this lesson, the commission is here given: "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28: 18-20.) "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." (Mark 16: 15, 16.) "And he said unto them, 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.) The apostles were therefore to begin world evangelism in the city of Jerusalem when they were endowed with power from on high. This power came upon them in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. "Ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence." (Acts 1: 5.) Again, "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1: 8.) This promised power came to the apostles in the baptism in the Holy Spirit on the first Pentecost after Jesus arose from the dead; then the work of preaching the gospel to all the world began. The persecution against the Jerusalem church spread the work extensively among the Jews and Samaritans. Peter carried the gospel to the Gentiles in preaching to Cornelius and his friends and kinsmen; and yet it does not seem that this group pushed out among other Gentiles. The real work of evangelizing the Gentile world began at Antioch. At least, this seems to have been the first decided effort to evangelize the Gentile world. Antioch, a central city, was a good place to begin such work. And yet it is singular that Cesarea did so little.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

## Barnabas and Saul Return to Antioch (Verse 25)

In our last lesson we learned that Barnabas and Saul were sent to Jerusalem from Antioch with relief for the famine stricken in Judea. (Acts 11: 29, 30.) Then Luke, in his narrative, turns aside to tell about a new persecution that had broken loose in Jerusalem. Herod, the grandson of Herod the Great, had beheaded James, and imprisoned Peter, intending to kill him also; but an angel delivered

Peter from prison. Luke also tells of Herod's miserable death. He then takes up the narrative about Barnabas and Saul. When they fulfilled their ministry in Jerusalem, they returned to Antioch, bringing John Mark with them. When the angel delivered Peter from prison, Peter resorted to the home of Mark's mother, who was named Mary. (Acts 12: 12.) Peter calls Mark his son, which shows that he became a Christian under the preaching of Peter. (1 Pet. 5: 13.) He was a cousin of Barnabas. (Col. 4: 10.)

### **The Prophets in the Antioch Church (Acts 13: 1)**

There were many prophets in the days of the apostles—perhaps more than at any other period in the world's history. In rank the prophets stood next to the apostles. "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues." (1 Cor. 12: 28.) This does not mean that the apostles were the first members of the church, and the prophets next. The fact is, men became prophets after they became members of the church. It means that the apostles were first in rank, and the prophets next. To say that Paul was talking about making members of the church is to involve him in the absurdity of saying that miracles, gifts of healings, and so on, were made members of the church! Paul was speaking of spiritual endowments, spiritual gifts; in that respect the apostles ranked first, the prophets second. The prophets and teachers here mentioned were in the church at Antioch. The language shows that they were what would now be known as members of that local church, and not mere visitors in the city. Five such men are mentioned, with Barnabas first and Saul last. It was the custom then, in writing a list of names, to write the most prominent or the most important one first and the least prominent last. This shows clearly that Saul was not at that time regarded as an apostle. Later on, in a similar list, his name would have come first. All prophets were teachers, but some teachers were not prophets. A prophet was one who spoke for another; God's prophets were God's spokesmen. God's prophets might have been teaching truths or duties, or foretelling things to come. A teacher was not necessarily inspired; a prophet was. A prophecy was not of one's own private forecast; "for no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Pet. 1: 21.) In view of the context it is strange that the words, "private interpretation," have been made to apply to the study of prophecies already made.

### **Barnabas and Saul Sent on an Evangelistic Tour (Verses 2, 3)**

To minister to the Lord is to serve him. The five men just mentioned were busy in the Lord's service. Just why they were fasting we are not told. Perhaps they were devoting themselves to a period of self-denial and prayer concerning the problem of keeping the work going in Antioch and yet be able to have the gospel preached in other parts of the country. At least, the directions given them by the Holy Spirit seem to have been an answer to them as to what to do. "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." It was virtually saying to

the other three, "You remain with the work here; but the gospel is needed in other places, and Barnabas and Saul are the men for that work." By that time a number of other active workers would have been developed in that church. Hence, the Lord called Barnabas and Saul to other fields. It is not said that the whole church had any hand in the arrangements for them to go on this preaching journey; but the fact that on their return they made their report to the church indicates that the church had a hand in sending them. (Acts 14: 26, 27.) Besides, they would need some money for fare on the boat and to pay other necessary expenses. Of course, the church would furnish that. It is easy to see why the brethren should pray on an occasion like that; but the purpose of their fasting and laying hands on Barnabas and Saul is not so easy to see. Present-day customs and practices sometimes cause men to see things in a scripture that are not there. It does not seem possible that hands were laid on them to confer spiritual gifts, for they already were thus endowed. The fasting, praying, and laying on of hands could not have been done for the purpose of inducting Barnabas and Saul into the office of evangelists, if there be such an office; for Saul had been preaching for a period of about ten years, and Barnabas some years longer. It seems rather to have been an expression of good will and fellowship, or benediction, much as when Jesus laid his hands on the children. (Matt. 19: 13-15.) Had these children been grown men, present-day habits of thought would have caused people to speculate as to what office Jesus was conferring on them.

### **Barnabas and Saul Sail to Cyprus (Verse 4)**

The church at Antioch did not send Barnabas and Saul on this preaching journey. The church did not so much as decide who should be sent. In verse 2 we read that the Holy Spirit said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." The Holy Spirit called them to the work, and had also given them the necessary spiritual endowments to enable them to do the work. They were sent by the Holy Spirit. The action of the brethren at Antioch did not confer upon them any power or authority. Later Paul was very plain in stating that his authority to preach did not come from men, not even from the other apostles. (Gal. 1: 11, 12, 15-17; 2: 6.) The church did pray for them, and lay hands on them as a pledge of fellowship. Seleucia was Antioch's seaport city. Here Barnabas and Saul took a boat for Cyprus. Cyprus was the native home of Barnabas. (Acts 4: 36, 37.) It is singular that Luke makes no mention of their visiting the part of the island where Barnabas had lived; it seems reasonable that they would seek out the kindred and old neighbors of Barnabas. Perhaps they did.

### **Barnabas and Saul Meet Opposition (Verses 5-8)**

Apparently Barnabas and Saul landed at Salamis, a city in the eastern end of Cyprus. Here they preached in the synagogues; we are not told whether any results followed their efforts. There must have been many Jews in that city, for they had more than one synagogue. Here Luke first mentions that John Mark was with them. From Salamis they went through the island to Paphos, a city on the

west end of the island. Here they encountered a sorcerer, a Jew named Bar-Jesus, "who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of understanding." Even men of understanding among the heathen were more or less superstitious, and were likely to come under the influence of a shrewd schemer like this renegade Jew. But it is clear that Sergius was not entirely satisfied with the professed powers of this Jew; for he "called unto him Barnabas and Saul, and sought to hear the word of God." It is possible that this Jew was drawing good pay from the proconsul, and had no mind to lose it. So he withstood Barnabas and Saul; he tried to beat them in arguing the matter. He must have been a man of force with a lot of confidence in his ability, or he would not have tried to beat Barnabas and Saul in argument. He, of course, had no thought of convincing the two preachers, but he was "seeking to turn aside the proconsul from the faith." Neither did Barnabas and Saul hope to benefit that renegade Jew; they were arguing for the benefit of the proconsul. And so it generally is in debates—neither party hopes to convince the other, but they hope to influence those who hear. And it sometimes happens that rather rough language is used in discussions, as in this case.

### The Proconsul Becomes a Believer (Verses 9-12)

Here we first meet with the new name for Saul of Tarsus. Henceforth he is Paul the apostle. Paul knew that Elymas was thoroughly bad, and told him so, being filled with the Holy Spirit. Really it was not Paul, but the Holy Spirit, who said, "O full of all guile and all villany, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" This might have sounded severe to Sergius Paulus; but when Saul pronounced that Elymas would be blind for a season, and blindness actually came upon Elymas, the proconsul knew that the hand of the Lord was in it all. "Then the proconsul, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord." The miracle convinced him that the teaching of Barnabas and Saul was from the Lord. The heart of Elymas was so corrupt that the pure teaching of the gospel would not influence him; he was led away by the hand of others, being blind both physically and spiritually.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Churches should make decided efforts to plant churches in every central point. That was the plan followed by Spirit guided men. Watch the preaching of Paul, and see how he followed this plan.

"Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch"—brought up together as brothers, and yet what a difference in their lives. Herod had just beheaded James and meant to kill Peter also, and then died a miserable death. Manaen was preaching that which Herod sought to destroy.

Let us not advocate a course of action that would reflect on Jesus and Paul. Once a well-educated and suave preacher delivered a lecture on Luke, in which he eulogized Luke as a cultured gentleman. Said he, "Some of the other writers recorded those terrific denunciations Jesus delivered against the scribes and the Pharisees, but not Luke, not Luke." That was plainly saying that Jesus used

language that Luke was too much of a gentleman to repeat; though, of course, the preacher did not so realize. But such language is unfortunate. Rebuke when it is needed.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Establishing churches in central places.

Paul's commission as given in Acts 26: 16-18.

The attitude of Jesus and Paul toward false doctrine and false teachers.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
What did the Great Commission require as to world evangelism?  
Show when they began to operate under this commission.  
What shows that they did not understand the world-wide nature of the gospel?  
Where did the first real effort to evangelize the Gentiles begin?

#### Verse 25

Why had Barnabas and Saul been to Jerusalem?  
What occurred in Jerusalem about this time?  
Tell about Mark.

#### Acts 13: 1

What was the rank of prophets in the church?  
Discuss I Cor. 12: 28.  
Name the prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch.

What was then the relative rank of Barnabas and Saul?  
What was a prophet?  
Discuss 2 Pet. 1: 20, 21.

#### Verses 2, 3

Discuss each item in verses 2 and 3.

#### Verse 4

Tell how Barnabas and Saul reached Cyprus.  
Who really sent Saul and Barnabas on this journey? Give proof.

#### Verses 5-8

Describe the movements of Barnabas and Saul in Cyprus.  
Whom did they encounter at Paphos? Tell about this encounter.

#### Verses 9-12

By what new name was Saul called? Discuss what he said to Elymas.  
How did the whole matter affect the proconsul?  
Discuss the reflections.

### Lesson XI—June 15, 1941

## PROGRESS IN WORLD MISSIONS

Acts 13: 44-52; Gal. 3: 26-29

44 And the next sabbath almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God.

45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy, and contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, and blasphemed.

46 And Paul and Bär'nä-bäs spake out boldly, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gën'tiles.

47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying,

I have set thee for a light of the Gën'tiles,

That thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth.  
48 And as the Gën'tiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of God: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

49 And the word of the Lord was spread abroad throughout all the region.

50 But the Jews urged on the devout women of honorable estate, and the chief men of the city, and stirred up a persecution against Paul and Bär'nä-bäs, and cast them out of their borders.

51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto I-cō'n'i-üm.

52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

- 26 For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jē'sūs.  
 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.  
 28 There can be neither Jew nor Græek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one *man* in Christ Jē'sūs.  
 29 And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. 3: 26.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 67.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|             |       |  |
|-------------|-------|--|
| June 9. M.  | ..... | Preaching to the Jews (Acts 13: 26-33)       |
| June 10. T. | ..... | Preaching to the Gentiles (Acts 13: 44-52)   |
| June 11. W. | ..... | Justified by Our Faith (Gal. 3: 23-29)       |
| June 12. T. | ..... | Justified by God's Grace (Rom. 3: 21-30)     |
| June 13. F. | ..... | Strengthening the Believers (Acts 14: 21-28) |
| June 14. S. | ..... | God's Doings (Isa. 12: 1-6)                  |
| June 15. S. | ..... | A New Earth (Rev. 21: 1-5)                   |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—For Acts 13: 44-52, about A.D. 46 or 47; for Gal. 3: 26-29, about A.D. 55.

*Places.*—Antioch in Pisidia, and Galatia; the letter to the churches of Galatia was probably written at Ephesus, though other places have been mentioned as possible places of writing the letter.

*Persons.*—Paul and Barnabas, Jews and Gentiles of Antioch in Pisidia, the members of the churches in Galatia.

*Lesson Links.*—Our last lesson left Paul and Barnabas at Paphos, on the island of Cyprus. From Paphos they sailed in a northwesterly direction to Perga in Pamphylia. Here Mark turned back. His reason for doing so is not given; but Paul did not approve of his forsaking them, for he refused to take Mark on their next journey. (Acts 15: 36-40.) However, Mark later fully reestablished himself in Paul's favor. Paul and Barnabas made the crossing of the dangerous mountains, and came to Antioch in Pisidia. (The student should make frequent use of the map in tracing out the journey of Paul and Barnabas.) “In the journey from the coast to the interior, Paul may have encountered some of the perils of robbers, and perils of rivers, to which he alludes in 2 Cor. 11: 26. The marauding habits of the people on the mountains which he now crossed were notorious in all ancient history. The country swarmed with banditti of the most desperate character. The physical character of the region exposed him, also, to the other class of dangers. The streams here are numerous and violent, beyond those of any other tract in Asia Minor. Torrents burst out at the base of huge cliffs, or dash down wildly through narrow ravines.”—*Hackett*. More than likely these dangers caused Mark to forsake them at Perga. On the first Sabbath after their arrival in Antioch Paul and Barnabas attended the synagogue; likely they had formed the acquaintance of the elders, or rulers, of the synagogue before Sabbath came. After the customary reading of the law, Paul and Barnabas were invited to speak, if they had anything to say. Their attending synagogues on the Sabbath has been wrongly used to support two mistaken ideas; namely, (1) that they were still observing the Sabbath, and therefore the Sabbath law was still in force. But they went to the synagogue on the Sabbath because they would find a crowd to whom they could

preach the gospel. Paul's sermon proves that. It will be noticed that he did not intimate that the law of the Sabbath was still in force. (2) Their preaching to the Jews first in every city where there were Jews has been taken by some as proof that God still favored the Jews above the Gentiles, and that therefore he will yet so favor them. But inspired men taught plainly that God put no difference between Jews and Gentiles; but this will be discussed more fully in that part of our lesson taken from Galatians.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### The Jews Contradicted Paul, and Blasphemed (Verses 44, 45)

"The next sabbath." This was the second Sabbath of their stay in Antioch. On the first Sabbath Paul had preached quite a lengthy sermon to those who attended the synagogue services, in which he sought to convince his hearers that Jesus was the Christ, the Christ of the seed of David. He made a favorable impression on many, for "they besought that these words might be spoken to them the next sabbath." It is not to be supposed that Paul and Barnabas were idle during the intervening week; they would seek out those who had shown an interest in what had been preached, and further instruct them. So great was the interest when the second Sabbath of their stay in Antioch had come, "almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God." No ordinary synagogue could have accommodated such a crowd; it is possible that they had a great outdoor meeting, or that Paul spoke in one place and Barnabas in another. The leaders of the synagogue had been able to attract to their teaching some Gentiles, but never such crowds as came together to hear Paul and Barnabas. They resented it; "they were filled with jealousy." It seemed to them that Paul and Barnabas had taken everybody away from them; so they resorted to argument. When they were worsted in argument, they blasphemed. If they could not meet Paul's arguments, they could say mean things about what he preached; they could revile his teaching. That sort of thing is done even today by certain classes of religious teachers. A doctrine which they cannot disprove they can call vile names—they thus blaspheme.

#### Paul and Barnabas Turn to the Gentiles (Verses 46, 47)

The gospel began to be preached to the Jews first. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. (Rom. 1: 16.) In places where there were Jews the apostles first preached in their synagogues. And yet it is plainly declared that there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile. (Acts 11: 12; 15: 9; Rom. 3: 22; 10: 12.) Why then, to the Jew first? The Jews accepted the law of Moses and the prophets; they believed in the one God. It was better therefore to begin preaching to those with whom they had some fundamentals in common; besides, they could reach many of the religiously inclined Gentiles at the synagogues. And, too, had they gone among the heathen first, the Jews would have paid no attention to them at all. Hence, from every angle, it was best to preach to the Jews first; and so the Lord ordered. And so Paul said to the Jews in

Antioch, "It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you." But they had contradicted, and blasphemed. They thought they were condemning what Paul preached; in so doing they were really passing sentence on themselves—declaring themselves to be unworthy of the life and blessings offered in the gospel. It was useless to preach to such people. "Seeing ye thrust it from you." That expression shows how utterly they detested the gospel. "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles." Of course, this related only to the Jews in Antioch. But to be thus rejected by Paul and Barnabas in favor of the Gentiles would enrage these Jews still more. And yet Paul reminds them that God had so commanded it in the prophets whom they professed to believe. He quotes Isa. 69: 6, which the Jews should have already understood; but apparently they could see nothing in the prophets but themselves, so self-centered were they.

### **The Gentiles Glorified the Word of God (Verses 48, 49)**

The Gentiles rejoiced that even the prophets of the Jews had foretold that the gospel should be preached to them; they glorified the word of God—praised it because they were included in its provisions. They would therefore the more readily yield themselves to its demands. "And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." This verse has caused an endless amount of controversy—some hold that the word here translated ordained means also disposed; others argue from it as if it meant foreordained or predestinated. But there should be no trouble in understanding the passage, even allowing ordained to remain in the text. God has ordained that some shall be saved—foreordained, if you prefer; but whom? Jesus said, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." (Matt. 5: 6.) Does not Jesus here ordain that all such characters shall be saved? To the same import God said through the prophet, "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 it will be noticed that this ordaining is not without the will of the individuals. God has ordained that all who will hear him and obey him shall be saved; those who will not hear him are predestined to destruction. As to which class a person belongs depends on himself. These Gentiles were willing to hear God's word; God had ordained that all such characters would hear it and be saved by obedience to it. There is no hidden mystery about it.

Even though Mark had turned back at Perga, it is likely that others were with Paul and Barnabas. (Acts 13: 13.) If so, they helped in preaching the word throughout all the region about Antioch.

### **They Are Forced Out of Antioch (Verses 50-52)**

"The devout women of honorable estate" were Gentile women who had come to believe in the one God. The term, "honorable estate," seems to indicate that they were the wives of the rulers of the city; at least, they were women of influence with the Gentile rulers of the city. Through them the Jews worked their scheme to get rid of Paul and Barnabas. A good woman, misdirected, can do a lot of harm in this world. These devout women had the help of the chief men of the city; this connection renders it the more probable that these women were the wives of the chief men of the city. These

devout women of honorable estate and the chief men of the city would not make any direct move against Paul and Barnabas till they had campaigned against them, and stirred up a persecuting spirit among the people, thus proving themselves to be successful politicians. To show their disapproval and condemnation of such treatment as they had received, Paul and Barnabas "shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium." In going to Iconium, they traveled about forty-five miles in a southeasterly direction. Iconium was an important city. But their leaving under such persecution might have had a bad effect on less courageous disciples, but the disciples they left behind were full of joy in their new-found religion, and full of the Holy Spirit.

### **How They Became Sons of God (Gal. 3: 26, 27)**

When Jesus told Nicodemus that a person must be born again, he was using figurative language. In becoming a Christian the change is so radical as to be called a birth; there is a passing from one condition to another. In that process people become children of God. Hence, Paul tells the Galatian brethren that they are all sons of God in Christ; the reader should notice the punctuation of verse 26. It is through faith that they become children of God. On what grounds did Paul affirm that they were children of God in Christ, through faith? He immediately gives the grounds on which he makes the affirmation: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." He could say that they were children of God in Christ because they had been baptized into Christ, and thus put on Christ. And they were children of God through faith, because their faith led them to be baptized into Christ. Hence, Paul could affirm that they were children of God in Christ, and that it was through their faith that they were baptized into Christ.

### **All Are One in Christ Jesus (Verse 28)**

The law made a distinction between Jews and Gentiles, standing as a wall between the two peoples. So long as it stood, both Jew and Gentile could not have been brought together in one body, in one worshiping assembly. The gospel destroys that distinction, putting both on an equal footing. The law was taken out of the way that this might be. "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." (Eph. 2: 14-16.) So, then, in Christ Jesus all are children of God, and there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile; "for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus."

### **All in Christ Are Abraham's Seed (Verse 29)**

The promise made to Abraham concerning his seed find their fulfillment in Christ and those who believe in him. Those who believe in Christ are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise made to Abraham. In many passages this fact is made plain. In his speech in Antioch of Pisidia Paul said, "And we bring you good

tidings of the promise made unto the fathers, that God hath fulfilled the same unto our children." (Acts 13: 32, 33.) Rom. 4: 14 is very enlightening. "They that are of the law" are the fleshly descendants of Abraham. If they are the heirs of the promise, then what? "For if they that are of the law are heirs, faith is made void, and the promise is made of none effect." Hence, it is those who are the children of God in Christ who are the seed of Abraham, the heirs of the promise.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Instead of recognizing that God was working out through them his plan for the redemption of the world, the Jews concluded that God cared for no other people. The promise to Abraham and their own prophets should have taught them the truth, but they were too much wrapped up in themselves to see the truth.

Every time we judge a doctrine or another person, we judge ourselves. In condemning evil, we declare ourselves righteous. In condemning righteousness we declare our sinfulness. In other words, every judgment we deliver shows what sort of person we are. Our judgments on others reveal our own standards. The character of the Jews was revealed in their blaspheming the gospel.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The perils and hardships through which Paul passed.

How our judgments reveal our character.

How the gospel makes no distinction between Jew and Gentile.

Paul and the Judaizing members of the church.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Where did our last lesson leave Paul and Barnabas?

Tell the direction and possible perils of their trip to Antioch of Pisidia.  
Tell about their first Sabbath in Antioch.

Why would they first preach in the synagogue?

#### Verses 44, 45

What occurred on the second Sabbath of their stay in Antioch?

What plea had been made to them last Sabbath, and by whom?

What of the crowd on this second Sabbath?

What did the Jews do about it, and why?

#### Verses 46, 47

Discuss fully why the gospel was first preached to the Jews.

What did Paul say to these Jews?  
Discuss the import of his language.

#### Verses 48, 49

What characters are ordained, or appointed, to eternal life?  
What does this show as to the responsibility of the sinner?

#### Verses 50-52

Read and discuss these verses.

#### Gal. 3: 26, 27

Discuss these two verses.

#### Verse 28

For Jew and Gentile to be one, what had to be done?

#### Verse 29

Who are now Abraham's seed and heirs according to promise?

Discuss the point.  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson XII—June 22, 1941

## THE JERUSALEM CONFERENCE

Acts 15: 6-21

6 And the apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider of this matter.

7 And when there had been much questioning, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gēn'tiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

8 And God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us;

9 And he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith.

10 Now therefore why make ye trial of God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

11 But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jē'sūs, in like manner as they.

12 And all the multitude kept silence; and they hearkened unto Bār'nā-bās and Paul rehearsing what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gēn'tiles through them.

13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Brethren, hearken unto me:

14 Sým'ē-ōn hath rehearsed how first God visited the Gēn'tiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written.

16 After these things I will return,

And I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen;

And I will build again the ruins thereof,

And I will set it up:

17 That the residue of men may seek after the Lord,

And all the Gēn'tiles, upon whom my name is called,

18 Saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from of old.

19 Wherefore my judgment is, that we trouble not them that from among the Gēn'tiles turn to God;

20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood.

21 For Mō'sēs from generations of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they." (Acts 15: 11.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Gal. 4: 1-7.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS.**—

|             |       |  |
|-------------|-------|--|
| June 16. M. | ..... | The Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15: 1-11)     |
| June 17. T. | ..... | The Decision of the Council (Acts 15: 12-21) |
| June 18. W. | ..... | The Decrees of the Council (Acts 15: 22-29)  |
| June 19. T. | ..... | Righteousness by Faith (Gal. 2: 11-21)       |
| June 20. F. | ..... | Freedom from Bondage (Gal. 5: 1-6)           |
| June 21. S. | ..... | Freedom in Christ (Rom. 8: 1-10)             |
| June 22. S. | ..... | Complete in Christ (Col. 3: 8-17)            |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—A.D. 49 or 50.

*Place.*—Jerusalem.

*Persons.*—Paul and Barnabas, the apostles and brethren in Jerusalem, and certain Judaizing brethren.

*Lesson Links.*—When Paul and Barnabas finished the missionary journey which we studied in the last two lessons, they returned to Antioch, "from whence they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled. And when they were

come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all things that God had done with them, and that he had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles. And they tarried no little time with the disciples." (Acts 14: 26-28.) While they tarried at Antioch, a disturbance arose, which led up to the Jerusalem meeting, and which is best described in Luke's own words. Besides, we do not get the full significance of the Jerusalem meeting, unless we find the causes which made it necessary. "And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, saying, Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved. And when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and questioning with them, the brethren appointed that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. They therefore, being brought on their way by the church, passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church and the apostles and the elders, and they rehearsed all things that God had done with them. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying, It is needful to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses." Paul knew the truth in the matter, and did not have to go up to Jerusalem to find out what should be done. Concerning this gospel which he preached to the Gentiles, he said, "For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. 1: 12.) But these Judaizing teachers did not recognize the authority of the apostle Paul, and claimed to have authority from the apostles at Jerusalem for what they taught. Hence, to keep down an endless controversy, it became necessary to go up to Jerusalem about the matter. So the church sent Paul and Barnabas, and certain others, to Jerusalem to learn exactly what the apostles in Jerusalem said about the matter. The others who went with Paul and Barnabas would be advocates of the other side of the controversy. To settle the matter so that the Judaizing teachers could not say that the matter had not been correctly presented to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, it would be necessary for some of them to be present.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### A Gathering to Consider the Matter (Verse 6)

The meeting of verse 6 is a second meeting. In verses 4 and 5 we learn that a meeting was held in which both sides of the controversy were argued. Paul and Barnabas rehearsed all things that God had done with them in their preaching among the Gentiles. They showed that God had been with them in their work, as proof that God accepted the Gentiles without circumcision. But certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed said, "It is needful to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses." This group really wanted to make the church merely another sect of the Jews' religion. Their position was that Gentiles could not enjoy the blessings of salvation except as they became subservient to the Jews; and their position resembles some things taught today. After both sides of the matter were presented in an open meeting, the apostles and elders must have had a conference to arrange the details

of the present meeting; the orderly way in which matters were presented in this meeting so indicates. As the whole church was concerned in the matter, they needed to have full information so that peace might prevail. This meeting was evidently held for their benefit; certainly it was not held to give the apostles an opportunity to learn what should be done. Neither was the meeting held to give the church an opportunity to decide by vote, or otherwise, what should be done. One who realizes the importance of that question to all the churches of that time, and for all time, knows that it could not be left to the voice of uninspired men, but must be settled by the voice of God through his inspired apostles. It would have been settled at Antioch had the Judaizers recognized that Paul was speaking as God directed.

### **Peter Tells About Preaching to Gentiles (Verses 7-9)**

Of course the Judaizers would be allowed to make a full statement of their reasons for demanding that all Gentile Christians should be circumcised. Peter did not speak till there had been much questioning, or debating. God had selected Peter to preach to the Gentiles at Cesarea, an account of which we have in the tenth chapter. The whole church would know about the conversion of Cornelius, his kinsmen, and friends. It had then been settled that it was right to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, but another issue had been raised, namely, that these baptized Gentiles must be circumcised. God bore witness to these Gentiles that they were acceptable to him in that he gave them miraculous powers of the Holy Spirit. But even so, their faith in Christ came as a result of hearing the word of the gospel, which Peter preached.

*No Distinction.*—Again and again we run up on evidence that under the gospel there is no distinction between Jews and Gentiles. All are sinners and all must be saved the same way. "Cleansing their hearts by faith." But their hearts were not cleansed by faith only—not cleansed the moment they believed. Faith only does not cleanse the heart, nor does it accomplish anything else. A person must become sorry that he is a sinner before he will make any attempt to put sin out of his heart. And an impenitent heart certainly is not clean and pure. In this instance, as in many others, the word faith covers the whole process of becoming a Christian. Peter, in another place, says we purify our souls in obedience to the truth. (1 Pet. 1: 22.) Hence, a faith that leads to obedience to the truth purifies the heart, and no other degree of faith does so. It is astonishing that people have argued otherwise.

### **The Unbearable Yoke (Verses 10, 11)**

God had accepted the Gentiles at Cesarea without circumcision, nor had he required that they should be circumcised after they were baptized. Hence, God himself had settled that matter, and gave abundant proof that he had done so; now to demand that Gentiles be circumcised, or even to demand a new revelation from him, was to tempt, or try, him—to try his patience. It was a severe rebuke to the Judaizers, who had caused all this stir and this long journey from Antioch to Jerusalem, to see if God would not make some new revelation concerning the acceptance of the Gentiles; it seems that they thought he might at this time reverse himself and side with

them! In just what sense Peter meant that the law was an unbearable yoke is not so easy to determine. Perhaps it was because the law did not justify, did not make perfect, but condemned and left a feeling of the burden of sin. The gospel did free from sin, and was therefore an easy yoke. And Peter affirms his belief that Jews and Gentiles would be saved in the same way. The Gentiles did not have to come under the law of Moses to be saved; and the Jew also would be saved without being under that law. It was a declaration of freedom from the law for both Jews and Gentiles. It does not seem that any statement to that effect had hitherto been made to the Jewish Christians.

### **Barnabas and Paul Speak (Verse 12)**

The multitude here mentioned were the disciples who had come together. They were silently giving undivided attention to what was being said. "And they hearkened unto Barnabas and Paul." At first it was Barnabas and Saul. From Acts 13: 13 to this instance it was Paul and Barnabas. The order is changed here perhaps because Barnabas was better known in Jerusalem than was Paul, and likely was held in higher esteem. Which one did most of the talking at this time we are not informed; but the people gave close attention to what they said about the wonders and signs God had wrought through them as they preached among the Gentiles. These wonders and signs were indisputable proof that God was with them, approving their work. It was proof that God did not require the Gentiles to be circumcised.

### **James Appeals to the Prophets (Verses 13-18)**

This is not James the brother of John; that James had been killed by Herod. (Acts 12: 1, 2.) This James was the other apostle named James. It seems that he put in the most, if not all, of his time in Jerusalem. It seems that the Judaizing teachers claimed they had authority from James, but his speech shows that he had given them no such authority. He affirms that Peter's preaching to the Gentiles, and therefore all preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, was foretold by the prophets. How many prophets he quoted we are not told; it should be remembered that we have only a brief summary of what was said. The prophecy of Amos (9: 11, 12) is given. The tabernacle of David was the royal family of David, not the church. The royal family had fallen into decay; there had been no seed of David on the throne for a long time. Not only so, but the royal family had become very poor, seeking to make a living at the workbench. Of that family Jesus was born, the rightful heir to the throne. The tabernacle of David was set up—the seed of David became king—when Jesus ascended to heaven and was made both Lord and Christ. (Acts 2: 29-36.) He was thus exalted "that the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from of old." James quotes this prophecy to prove that it was God's will that the gospel should now be preached to the Gentiles. And the use he makes of the prophecy shows that the tabernacle of David had been set up, and that Jesus the Christ was then on the throne of David. Those who say that the tabernacle of David has not yet been set up, and that Christ is not on the throne of David, really accuse James of misrepresenting Amos.

### The Judgment of James (Verses 19-21)

James, being an inspired man and an ambassador of Christ, spoke as the Holy Spirit gave him utterance. The judgment therefore that he expressed was an inspired judgment. "Wherefore my judgment is, that we trouble not them that from among the Gentiles turn to God." Wherever these Judaizers had gone among churches having Gentile members, they had given much trouble. But there were certain practices that brethren from among the Gentiles needed to be warned against; such things as the pollutions of idols, fornications, animals or fowls that were strangled, and blood. There was no need that such things be written to the Jews, for the law of Moses, which they all respected, warned against such things. In fact, the eating of blood was prohibited long before the law of Moses was given. "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." (Gen. 9: 4.) The law of Moses was very strict in its prohibition against the eating of blood. (Lev. 17: 10-16; Deut. 12: 16, 23.) They were required to bleed the animals and birds which they took in their hunting. Our present lesson forbids the eating of things strangled, because a strangled bird or animal does not bleed. Some people in killing a chicken wring its neck just enough to break its neck, and in so doing they give it no chance to bleed. It is the same as a thing strangled. No one should eat a chicken so killed. Verses 22-35 of the chapter we are studying should be read closely in preparing this lesson. The speeches the apostles made caused the whole church to see the truth in the matter. They were ready to join with the apostles and elders in sending men to Antioch with a letter containing the things James judged to be necessary. To be sure to satisfy all the disciples at Antioch, some of the Jerusalem brethren were sent with Paul and Barnabas. When the letter was read to the church at Antioch, the brethren, having been in suspense all this time, "rejoiced for the consolation."

### SOME REFLECTIONS

It is a perversion of the fifteenth chapter of Acts to use it in support of general assemblies, conferences, conventions, and the right of churches to settle doctrinal questions. It certainly does not support all these various things. In fact, there would have been no such meeting had the Judaizers at Antioch recognized Paul as an apostle.

It seems that the decision announced at Jerusalem would have stopped all future disturbances by these Judaizers, but not so. What God says through his inspired men has very little weight with some who profess to be his servants. These false teachers seem to have carried on a systematic campaign among all the churches established by Paul and his company. They became especially aggressive in the churches of Galatia, as Paul's letter to the Galatians shows. At Corinth they sought to destroy Paul's influence by contending that he was not an apostle of the Lord. (1 Cor. 9: 1-3; 2 Cor. 10: 8-11; 11: 3-5; 12: 11, 12; 13: 2, 3.) If they could have had their way, Christianity would have been a mere sect of the Jews. We wonder what might have been the results, had it not been for the heroic labors of Paul.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The church at Antioch.

Wrong uses made of this Jerusalem meeting.

Is Christ on David's throne?

Paul and the Judaizers.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place and persons.  
What did Paul and Barnabas do when they returned to Antioch?  
Tell about the disturbance at Antioch.  
Why was it necessary to go to Jerusalem about the matter?

#### Verse 6

Discuss verse 6, and the meeting mentioned in verses 4 and 5.

#### Verses 7-9

Repeat Peter's words in verse 7.  
How were the Gentiles' hearts cleansed?  
Show that it could not have been by faith only.

#### Verses 10, 11

How had God borne witness to the Gentiles of their acceptance?  
How was the law of Moses an unbearable yoke?

How does his language show that both Jew and Gentile will be saved without the law of Moses?

#### Verse 12

Discuss this verse.

#### Verses 13-18

What use did James make of the prophets in his speech?  
From whom did he quote?  
What is the tabernacle of David?  
How had it been set up again?  
When was Jesus exalted to his throne?  
What was to be the result of the exaltation of Christ?

#### Verses 19-21

What judgment did James give?  
What was the first prohibition against eating blood?  
What did the law of Moses say about eating blood?  
Why not eat things strangled?  
How was the word carried back to Antioch?  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson XIII—June 29, 1941

### LESSONS FROM THE EARLY CHURCH

#### 1 Cor. 3: 1-15

1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ.

2 I fed you with milk, not with meat; for ye were not yet able to bear it; nay, not even now are ye able;

3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal, and do ye not walk after the manner of men?

4 For when one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Ā-pōl'lōs; are ye not men?

5 What then is Ā-pōl'lōs and what is Paul. Ministers through whom ye believed; and each as the Lord gave to him.

6 I planted, Ā-pōl'lōs watered; but God gave the increase.

7 So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one; but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.

9 For we are God's fellow-workers; ye are God's husbandry, God's building.

10 According to the grace of God which was given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder I laid a foundation; and another buildeth thereon. But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jĕ'sūs Christ.

12 But if any man buildeth on the foundation gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble;

13 Each man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is.

14 If any man's work shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 3: 11.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—1 Cor. 1: 17-25.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS.**—

|          |    |       |  |
|----------|----|-------|--|
| June 23. | M. | ..... | The Gospel of Glory (1 Cor. 3: 1-11)         |
| June 24. | T. | ..... | The Gospel of Liberty (1 Cor. 3: 12-18)      |
| June 25. | W. | ..... | The Gospel for the Gentiles (Acts 10: 34-43) |
| June 26. | T. | ..... | Christianity's Message (Acts 13: 32-39)      |
| June 27. | F. | ..... | The Growth of the Kingdom (Matt. 13: 31-35)  |
| June 28. | S. | ..... | The Council of the Church (Acts 15: 1-6)     |
| June 29. | S. | ..... | Increasing Joy (Isa. 9: 1-7)                 |

## LESSON SETTINGS

**Time.**—A.D. 56, about two years after the close of Paul's first work in Corinth.

**Places.**—The letter was written at Ephesus, and sent to Corinth.

**Persons.**—Paul and the saints at Corinth.

**Lesson Links.**—An account of the planting of the church at Corinth will be found in Acts 18: 1-18. At this first visit to Corinth "he dwelt there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them." Within a short time Apollos went from Ephesus to Corinth; "and when he was come, he helped them much that had believed through grace; for he powerfully confuted the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ." (Acts 18: 24-28.) About two years after Paul left Corinth, he wrote this first letter to them. It is astonishing that so many evils had developed in that church in so short a time. Some of these evils were such as were common among the people of that country. The Greeks were great speculators in the realm of learning, and prided themselves on their philosophy. Various teachers of philosophy established different schools of thought, and had their following. In imitation of this Greek custom, the disciples at Corinth called themselves after their favorite teacher or preacher in the church. They failed to realize that there should be no different schools of thought in the church. Hence, Paul's admonition: "Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Cor. 1: 10.) In other matters they had not completely recovered from their heathen habits and customs. In imitation of their feasts to idols they had even gone so far as to make a feast of the Lord's Supper. But their pride in their philosophy—their notion that all worth-while knowledge could be arrived at by their own speculations—struck at one of the fundamentals of the Christian religion. The man who held to such a theory would repudiate revelation as useless. That theory had to be exposed, or it might spread through the whole church, and destroy it. Hence,

beginning with verse 18 of the first chapter and continuing to the close of the second chapter, Paul shows that the world by its wisdom cannot know God, nor the things of God, nor the things God has prepared for those that love him; that in all these things we are dependent on the revelation of the Spirit of God through inspired men. The natural man—the man who seeks to find out God and his provisions for man—cannot know the things of God. To such a man revelation is foolishness. What the eye could not see nor the ear hear, God revealed by his Spirit. Only in this way man came to know them.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### "I Fed You with Milk, Not with Meat" (Verses 1-4)

The Judaizing teachers had already begun their undermining work in Corinth. These sought in every way to discredit Paul. From what he here says, it seems that some of them had said his teaching was only of a surface nature. Paul freely admits that he had fed them with milk. They had not developed spiritually so as to be able to take the strong food. They were still babes, and needed light food. They had not reached the point in Christian growth where they could make use of the deeper things of the gospel. To give knowledge to a person that he is not sufficiently developed to use, is like giving a sharp knife to a babe; or to use Paul's figure, it would be like feeding meat to a babe. They had not grown spiritually; they were yet carnal; that is, they looked at the whole matter from a fleshly standpoint. As evidence that they were yet carnal, he calls attention again to their party feelings about certain men. "Are ye not men?" That is, Are ye not conducting yourselves as men of the world do? The Greeks had their different schools of philosophy, and the church at Corinth was imitating them. And there were jealousy and strife among them. Each one was jealous for the man whom he regarded as the head of his party. That condition of heart inevitably led to strife; strife was a contention in words. Of course that was bound to lead to divisions, or factions. Paul reminds them that so long as they are in that condition they need the plain simple things of the gospel. Had he propounded to them deeper things, they would have had something else to argue about. To people who prided themselves on their superior knowledge, so superior that they had felt able to criticise Paul's preaching, his rebuke must have been both surprising and humiliating.

### "What Then Is Apollos? and What Is Paul?" (Verses 5-7)

What is any man that people should line up behind him as their leader, or the head of their party? If we were going to line up behind any leader, would we not prefer Paul above all other men? Would we not rather be a Paulite as any other ite? But if we take Paul as our head, and call ourselves Paulites, we must do it over his protest. In disparaging himself and Apollos, he was also rebuking the brethren for claiming to be their followers. "What then is Apollos? and what is Paul?" Not, Who are they? but, What are they? "Ministers"—merely servants through whom ye believed. Here again it is affirmed that men become believers through the instrumentality of God's ministers—God's servants. In Luke's

account of Paul's first preaching at Corinth, he says, "And many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." "I planted." Paul planted the church at Corinth; Apollos came along later and watered it. That is a striking figure of speech. A church does not spring up out of nothing; it must be planted. Neither does it grow from anything in the moral and spiritual atmosphere surrounding it; it must be irrigated by the water of life in the gospel. Apollos did this; he nourished the newly planted church. Yet compared with the Lord, they were as nothing. Neither Paul, nor Apollos, nor any other man is of sufficient importance to be put at the head of a party in religion. Glory not in the man who planted nor in the man who watered, but in God who gives the increase.

### **"We Are God's Fellow-Workers" (Verses 8, 9)**

"Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one." The two are certainly not blended into one person; each retains his own identity, for one plants and the other waters. Even their work differs, but neither antagonizes the other. They are one in purpose, and in the final results of their work. In developing a church there are two parties—God is one, and those who plant and cultivate are the other. Both the planter and the waterer shall receive his own reward, and that reward will be rendered according to his labor. The planter and the waterer are fellow laborers—they are working together to accomplish the same end. It sometimes happens, however, that professed Christians are not fellow workers; for while one is trying to build up, another is tearing down. Apparently that was true with reference to some at Corinth, but not of Paul and Apollos. They were "God's fellow-workers"—they were fellow workers who belonged to God. As Paul planted and Apollos watered, so the church was God's cultivated field. "Husbandry" is not a word used much among the common run of people—the Greek word means in common words, plowed-field. Then Paul changes the figure immediately, adding "God's building." But Paul does not here tell what kind of building the church is; but he does tell in verse 16: "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" It is God's dwelling place among men, the house in which God is worshiped. It is therefore a sacred building, so much so that Paul says, "If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye." (Verse 17.)

### **The Foundation of the Temple (Verses 10, 11)**

The apostle regards it as grace, or favor, that God made an apostle of him. The same thought is expressed in such passages as Rom. 12: 3; 15: 16; Gal. 2: 9; Eph. 3: 6, 7. It was through this grace, or favor, bestowed on him in making him an apostle, that enabled him to be a wise master builder. In erecting a building of any importance a wise master builder, lays a good foundation; for a building, no matter how costly or important it is, is no more substantial than its foundation. On what foundation is the temple of God, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, built? "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." When Peter confessed to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the

Son of the living God," Jesus replied, "Upon this rock I will build my church." (Matt. 16: 16-18.) The church was not built on Jesus as a good man, but upon the great central truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Take that truth out of the Bible, and the church has no worth-while foundation. That he is the Christ, the Son of the living God, is the only excuse for its existence. And this does not mean that he will be the Christ when he returns to the earth. If he be not the Christ now, the church has no real foundation; and those who confess that he is the Christ, and yet do not believe that he is now the Christ, do not believe what they confess. Paul did not mean that no other foundation could be laid for any other building; for every building, every fraternal order, and every other organization of whatever sort it may be, has its own peculiar foundation. But a church of Jesus Christ, the temple of God, can be built only on the one foundation which Paul laid for the temple of God at Corinth. The excuse or reason that gives rise to any body, religious or otherwise, is the foundation for that body. And if a body of people is not formed on Jesus as the Christ, it is not a church of Christ. Here is the central truth, the foundation stone, of our holy religion, and should be well understood. Believing that Jesus was a good man, or that he was a great teacher, is not enough. And when one believes with all his heart that Jesus is the Christ, he is ready then to be builded, as a living stone, into this glorious temple of God.

### **Let Each Man Take Heed How He Builds (Verses 12-15)**

Notice the last clause in verse 10: "But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon." Nothing but good, well prepared material should go into the erection of a fine building. An architect of a building sees that every piece of building material is according to his specifications. The builder takes heed how he builds. Strange notions have been advanced as to the building material for the temple. One good Bible student, and perhaps others, had the idea that Paul was talking about building individual Christian character; if a man were sincere, though he had some faults, he would be saved. But that cannot be; for Paul said he laid a foundation, and another built on it. He could not have meant that he laid a foundation for his own Christian character, and another person built his character! Some, with Adam Clark, think that the materials for the building are the doctrines which men preach; but it is difficult to see how doctrines would be tried by fire. Besides, the nature of the building shows the material of which it is built. "Ye are a temple of God." The church of God at Corinth was the temple of our lesson, and it was made of people. Take all the people who composed that church out from that city, and there would have been no church, no temple, there. Those who were bringing people into that church were building it. If there had been no conversions there, there would have been no church, no matter how many doctrines had been preached. No man can be sure that he is not building into the church some wood, hay, or stubble; he is almost sure to do so, if he makes a stronger appeal to the emotions than to the reason; he is certain to do so, if he holds up before the people wrong motives. But if a preacher, or any worker, is sincere in his efforts to induce people to obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, he himself will be saved,

though the fires of persecution or the fires of the judgment sweep away his building material. As to the fire that shall test every man's work, there is a difference of opinion as to whether it is the fires of persecution or the fires of judgment. Peter speaks of persecutions as fiery trials. (1 Pet. 4: 12.) But it makes little difference to us which fire is referred to, for if the fires of persecution sweep away our building material, they will suffer also the fires of the judgment. The best the builder can do is to take heed how he builds. How we build is therefore more important than how much we build.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Too much stress cannot be placed on having the right foundation. What is the foundation for the group with which you worship? What is your excuse or reason for being what you are and where you are? Whatever it is, it is your foundation. Is it a preacher? Did a group of brethren start up another congregation so as to have a certain preacher whom the rest of the church did not want? If so, the preacher is your foundation. Or did the church split up over a fuss between two brethren, or something else as foolish? A fuss between brethren is a poor foundation on which to build. A church of Jesus Christ cannot be built on any such foundations.

A great meeting was held years ago in a small town. Sixty were baptized. How much of this building material was gold, silver, or precious stones? Within less than eight months only three of the sixty ever attended worship on the Lord's day—a clear loss of ninety-five per cent. The fifty-seven were not even destroyed by the fires of persecution—they could hardly therefore be called wood, hay, or stubble, but mere chaff, which the winds carried away.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

- The one foundation.
- The church as a building.
- The building material.
- How to put into the building the right material.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Give an account of the beginning of the church at Corinth.  
What preacher followed Paul at Corinth?  
Name some of the evils that had sprung up in the church at Corinth.  
Discuss the limits of human wisdom.

How do we know of the things which God has prepared for them that love him?

#### Verses 1-4

What objection to himself does it seem that Paul is meeting in these verses?  
Why had he fed them with milk, not with meat?  
What evidence that they were carnal?  
What shows that they were conducting themselves as men of the world did?

**Verses 5-7**

Discuss verse 5.

What is meant in verse 6?

Discuss the meaning and force of verse 7.

**Verses 8, 9**

In what sense were Paul and Apollos one?

What is said of reward?

What is meant by fellow workers?

When are professed Christians not fellow workers?

What is the meaning of husbandry?

What kind of building is the church?

**Verses 10, 11**

To what grace, or manifestation of grace, does Paul refer?

Discuss the need of a good foundation.

Discuss the foundation Paul laid.

What about the foundations for the various bodies of people?

**Verses 12-15**

Repeat the admonition in the last clause of verse 10.

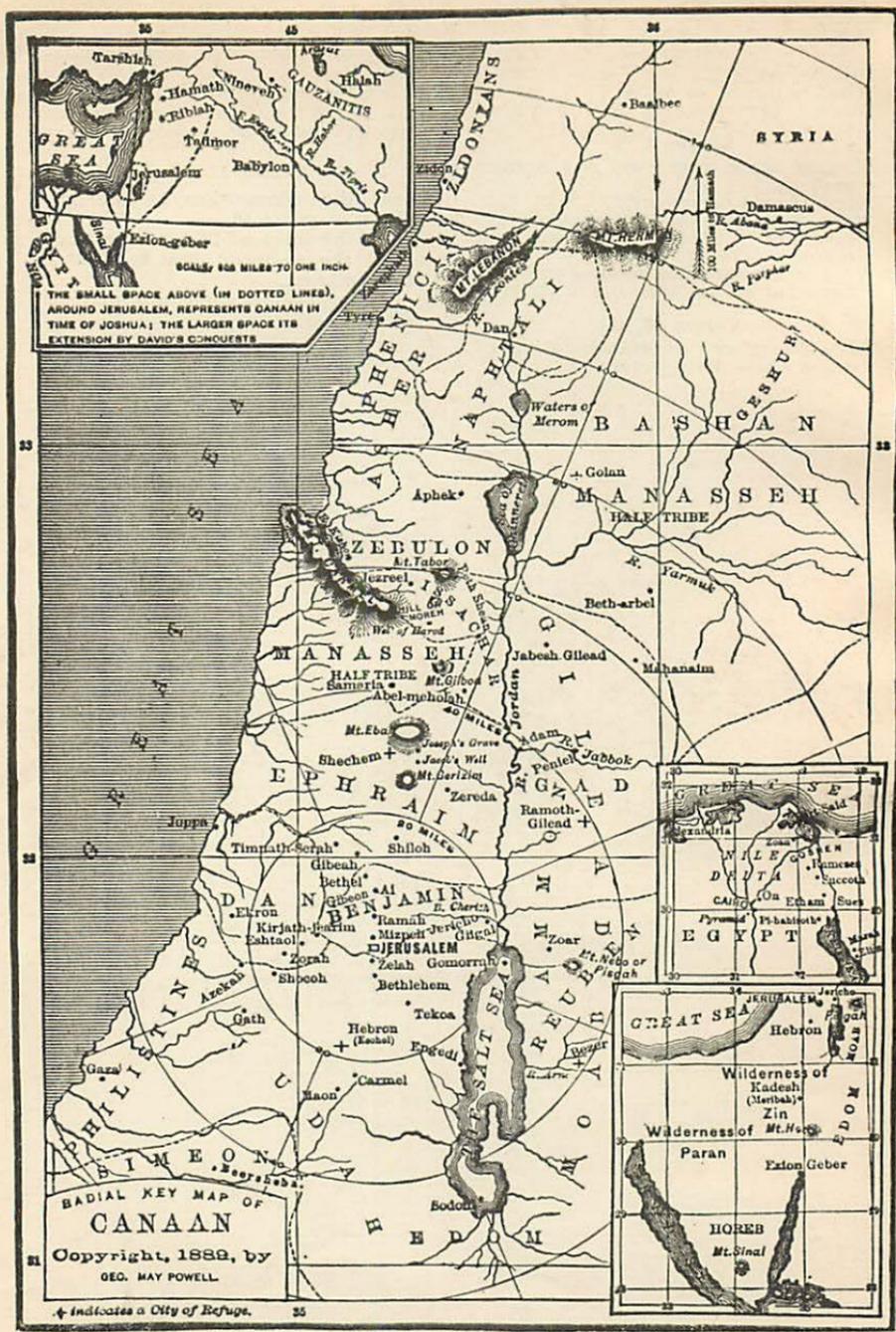
What is the force of that admonition?

Discuss the material that goes into this building.

Who is the builder, and how may he suffer loss?

How is the material tried?

Discuss the reflections.



◆ Indicates a City of Refuge.

## THIRD QUARTER

CHRISTIANITY REACHES OUT: STUDIES IN THE  
ACTS, THE EPISTLES, AND THE REVELATION

## (Second Half of a Six Months' Course)

AIM: To study the manner in which the Holy Spirit led Paul, Peter, James, John, and others to send letters of counsel and exhortation to Christian groups; to acquaint the pupil with the purpose and content of these letters, and to help him to live in the light of their teaching.

## Lesson I—July 6, 1941

## THE GOSPEL IS TAKEN INTO EUROPE

Acts 16: 6-15

6 And they went through the region of Phrÿg'î-â and Gă-lă'ti-â, having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Ā'si-â;

7 And when they were come over against Mÿ'si-â, they assayed to go into Bî-thÿn'î-â; and the Spirit of Jĕ'sÿs suffered them not;

8 And passing by Mÿ'si-â, they came down to Trô'ās.

9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There was a man of Măc-ĕ-dô'nî-â standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Măc-ĕ-dô'nî-â, and help us.

10 And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Măc-ĕ-dô'nî-â, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto them.

11 Setting sail therefore from Trô'ās, we made a straight course to Săm'ô-thrăce, and the day following to Nĕ-ăp'ô-lis;

12 And from thence to Phî-lîp'pî, which is a city of Măc-ĕ-dô'nî-â, the first of the district, a Roman colony: and we were in this city tarrying certain days.

13 And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake unto the women that were come together.

14 And a certain woman named Lÿd'î-â, a seller of purple, of the city of Thÿ-ă-tî-ră, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul.

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Come over into Macedonia, and help us.” (Acts 16: 9.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Phil. 4: 4-9.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|          |    |       |                                       |
|----------|----|-------|---------------------------------------|
| June 30. | M. | ..... | The Divine Command (Matt. 23: 18-20)  |
| July 1.  | T. | ..... | The Vision (Acts 16: 6-10)            |
| July 2.  | W. | ..... | A Straight Course (Acts 16: 11, 12)   |
| July 3.  | T. | ..... | An Open Heart (Acts 16: 13-15)        |
| July 4.  | S. | ..... | Casting Out Demons (Acts 16: 16-18)   |
| July 5.  | S. | ..... | Prisoners of Christ (Acts 16: 19-24)  |
| July 6.  | S. | ..... | More Than Conquerors (Acts 16: 25-34) |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—A.D. 49 or 50.

*Places.*—The regions of Phrygia and Galatia, Troas, Samothrace, Neapolis, and Philippi.

*Persons.*—The Holy Spirit, Paul, Silas, Timothy, Luke, and Lydia and her household.

*Lesson Links.*—After Paul and Barnabas returned from Jerusalem with the decrees "which had been ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem," they "tarried in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also." "And after some days Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us return now and visit the brethren in every city wherein we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they fare." But a misunderstanding arose. Barnabas wanted to take Mark; "but Paul thought not good to take with them him who withdrew from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work." This caused the disruption of their long partnership. Later Mark proved himself worthy of Paul's esteem and confidence. (Phil. 4: 10, 11; Phile. 24.) "Barnabas took Mark with him, and sailed away unto Cyprus: but Paul chose Silas, and went forth, being commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches." No account had been given of the planting of these churches. Paul may have done some of it before Barnabas brought him from Tarsus to Antioch. However, we have accounts of only a small part of the work that was done. "And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewess that believed; but his father was a Greek. The same was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium." The reputation that Timothy had made among the churches shows that he was not a mere boy at this time. "And as they went on their way through the cities, they delivered them the decrees to keep which had been ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem." A copy of these decrees was left with each church they visited. "So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily."

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

## The Journey to Troas (Verses 6-8)

In following Paul and his company on this journey the student should make free use of the map; for it is easier to locate places by the use of a map than by reading a description of their locations. Timothy is now a part of Paul's company. While the record here says nothing about their preaching in Phrygia and Galatia, it is almost certain that they did considerable preaching in these districts; for on Paul's next journey from Antioch he "went through the region of Galatia, and Phrygia, in order, establishing all the disciples." (Acts 18: 23.) There were churches in Galatia when Paul wrote his first letter to the church of God at Corinth, and there were churches in Galatia when Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians. (1 Cor. 16: 1; Gal. 1: 2.) Some of these, at least, must have been planted as they passed through on this journey. But they were "forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia." The expression shows that they had intended to preach in Asia; but in

some way the Holy Spirit made it plain to them that they were not now to do so. Later they did much preaching in Asia. This does not refer to the whole of what we now call Asia, for they had been preaching in that continent all along. What was then known as Asia was a Roman territory bordering on the Aegean Sea. Phrygia and Galatia were not parts of what was then called Asia. (See the map.) In the wisdom of God their labors would be more fruitful at that time in Europe than in Asia; Asia was not yet ripe for the harvest. They needed the gospel, it is true; but many places need the gospel that are not ripe unto harvest. Neither was Bithynia ready for the gospel; for when Paul and his company tried to go up into Bithynia "the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not." These are the first instances where it is said that the Holy Spirit so directly controlled these preachers' movements. It is possible even now for God, by his overruling providence, to direct the movements of preachers who sincerely desire to labor where they can do the most good; certainly God knows the field, and the fitness of certain preachers for certain fields. And it cannot be denied that he has as much interest now in the success of the preaching of the gospel as he had then. As Paul and his company were all human beings, they were bound to wonder why God was pushing them on in this northwesterly direction with no hint as to where they were going. "And passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas." They had now gone as far as they could go in the direction they were going, without taking shipping across the Aegean Sea. They could not help wondering if they had now reached their next field of labor. As Luke is passing rapidly over the events of this journey, as if he were hastening on to Europe, it is possible that Paul and his company did some preaching in Troas. At least, we find a church there later in Luke's narrative. (Acts 20: 7-12.)

### Paul's Vision at Troas (Verse 9)

"A vision appeared to Paul in the night." This vision must have appeared to Paul while he was awake, for nothing is said about his seeing a vision in a dream. To him it was as real as anything else in life. It was not a mere optical illusion, but a vision—something that he saw. It is a mistake to think that the visions in the Bible were mere optical illusions—something that appeared to be real, and yet were not. "There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us." Paul could now see why he had been led to this city. Some people in Macedonia knew that they needed help. All people in sin need help; but they will not receive the needed help, unless they realize their need. You cannot help people to become children of God so long as they are satisfied in their sins. God knew there were people in Macedonia who would gladly accept the help Paul and his company could bring to them.

### "We Sought to Go Forth into Macedonia" (Verse 10)

The only practical way for Paul and his company to answer this call from Macedonia was to go by ship across the Aegean Sea. "Straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia." They sought for a ship going across the sea. This is the first time Luke includes himself in his narrative, which shows that he became a part of the

company at Troas. From this point on it is easy to tell by the use Luke makes of the personal pronouns when he was with the company and when not with them. From the nature of Paul's vision they concluded that God had called them to preach the gospel to the people of Macedonia. To that country they could therefore go with all confidence, knowing that they were going exactly where God wanted them to be.

### They Go to Philippi (Verses 11-13)

So soon as possible they took shipping across the sea. "Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a straight course to Samothrace." Samothrace was an island between Troas and Neapolis; on it was a mountain of about five thousand feet elevation. This mountain made a good signpost for vessels sailing across the Aegean Sea. Here the ship must have anchored for the night. The wind had been favorable—they did not have to tack, but made a straight course to this island. "And the day following to Neapolis." This is the first time in Paul's preaching tours that he had set foot on European soil. Neapolis was a seaport city, about ten miles from Philippi. As Neapolis was not in Macedonia proper, Paul and his company would know that they had not yet reached the point from which the call had come. Sailing had been favorable, for they were only one night out. Did God control the winds, so as to drive the ship straight ahead? Why not? God can control the forces of nature without any one's being conscious of his control. From Neapolis they went inland to Philippi, so named for its builder, King Philip of Macedonia. "Which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a Roman colony." "The early colonies which Rome sent out were allowed to retain all their rights of citizenship, being permitted even to come to Rome at any time to vote and help make the laws."—*Morey's "Outlines of Ancient History."* The wording of the narrative shows that they arrived some days before the Sabbath. "And we were in this city tarrying certain days." To use a modern expression concerning such matters, they were making a survey of the city. They were seeking some favorable opening to begin preaching. They had found no synagogue, which showed them that there were very few, if any Jews, in that city. In some way they learned that a group of women were in the habit of meeting for worship on the Sabbath out by the river side; this would be the river Ganges. On the Sabbath, therefore, they went out to the place which they supposed to be the place of prayer. "And we sat down, and spake unto the women that were come together." It seems plain, therefore, that there were no men of the Jewish faith in that city.

### Lydia and Her Household Baptized (Verses 14, 15)

It is not certain that any but Lydia and her household were present. Lydia was a seller of purple, a purple-dyed cloth. The purple dye was obtained in small quantities from various kinds of shellfish found in the Mediterranean Sea. It was therefore a costly dye, and goods dyed with it were so costly that only the wealthy could buy them. To deal in such goods, Lydia must have been a woman of means. Her home city was Thyatira, in Asia, north of Ephesus. It is likely, therefore, that she had not taken up perma-

ment residence in Philippi. To describe her as one that worshiped God would not have been necessary, had she been a Jewess; she must, therefore, have been a Gentile that had been converted to the Jews' religion. She was an honest hearer. She did not have the prejudice for all things Jewish that many of the Jews had. Her reading of the Jewish scriptures doubtless had led her to expect something better, and her heart was calling for help. Paul and his company had come in answer to that call. "Whose heart the Lord opened." It is sheer assumption to say that the Lord opened her heart by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit. The Lord opened her heart through the truth of the gospel preached to her. Paul had been sent to open the eyes of the people, which means that he was to enable them to see the truth. (Acts 26: 16-18.) Through God's truth which Paul preached Lydia was so impressed with the truth that she obeyed what Paul preached. Her heart was opened by the story of the cross; and she gave heed—applied herself to, or rendered obedience to, what Paul preached. "And when she was baptized." This shows how she attended to the things Paul preached. Though she was not an European, she was Paul's first convert in Europe. "And her household." Her household would include her servants and helpers, who had gone out with her to this place of prayer. It is not said that she had any children, or was even married. The language of Luke shows that Lydia was the head of the household. "She besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us." She felt a delicacy in inviting these men into her house. "My house," she calls it. All these things show that she had no husband, and that she was the head of the family. Not all professed Christians are as anxious to have preachers in their homes as she was.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

God knows the fields, and he knows which preacher can do the most good in a certain field. It would be well for every preacher to pray to be led into the places where he can do the most good, instead of scrambling for the places where he can get the most pay.

Jesus said, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." (Matt. 5: 6.) That is as definite a promise as any in the Bible. It will in every case be fulfilled. Our lesson is one illustration as to how the promise is fulfilled.

The baptism of Lydia and her household gives no proof that infants were baptized by God's inspired men. One who attempts to build an argument for infant baptism on this case must assume, (1) that Lydia was married, (2) that she had children, (3) that some of the children were infants, and (4) that they were included in the number baptized. Too many assumptions, and no direct proof. If one could find a command for such a practice, the matter would be settled, but no such command can be found.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

A discussion of what is implied in Matt. 5: 6.

Visions spoken of in the Bible.

How does God open hearts?

Infant baptism—is it taught in the Bible?

## QUESTIONS

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

## Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Tell about Paul's movements between the last lesson and this.  
Show that Mark later established himself in Paul's favor.

## Verses 6-8

What proof that Paul and his company preached in Phrygia and Galatia?

Tell about their journey to Troas.  
How were they hindered from stopping along the way?

Do you think God now has any interest in where preachers go?

## Verse 9

Tell about Paul's vision.  
What did that vision teach Paul and his company?  
Why will some people not hear the gospel?

## Verse 10

How would Paul and his company go to Macedonia?  
What shows that Luke joined the company here?  
How may we know when Luke was with Paul and when not?

## Verses 11-13

Tell about their journey to Philippi.  
What is said of Philippi?  
Tell of the movements of Paul and his company in that city.  
Where did they find an opportunity to preach, and to whom did they preach?

## Verses 14, 15

What is said of Lydia?  
Tell about the purple dye.  
What indicates that Lydia was a Gentile converted to the Jewish religion?  
How did the Lord open her heart?  
How did she attend to what Paul said?  
Who were baptized?  
What shows that no infants were baptized?  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson II—July 13, 1941

## CHRISTIANITY EXPANDS IN ASIA

## Acts 19: 8-10, 23-32

8 And he entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the kingdom of God.

9 But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tÿ-rân'nûs.

10 And this continued for the space of two years; so that all they that dwell in Ā'si-ā heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Græeks.

23 And about that time there arose no small stir concerning the Way.

24 For a certain man named Dē-mē'tri-ūs, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Dī-ā'nā, brought no little business unto the craftsmen;

25 Whom he gathered together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this business we have our wealth.

26 And ye see and hear, that not alone at Eph'ē-sūs, but almost throughout all Ā'si-ā, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they are no gods, that are made with hands;

27 And not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute; but also that the temple of the great goddess Dī-ā'nā be made of no account, and that she should even be deposed from her magnificence whom all Ā'si-ā and the world worshippeth.

28 And when they heard this they were filled with wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Dī-ā'nā of the Ē-phē'si-āns.

29 And the city was filled with the confusion; and they rushed with one accord into the theatre, having seized Gā'iūs and Ār-is-tār'chūs, men of Māc-ē-dō'nī-ā, Paul's companions in travel.

30 And when Paul was minded to enter in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

31 And certain also of the Ā'si-ārchs, being his friends, sent unto him and besought him not to adventure himself into the theatre.

32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another; for the assembly was in confusion; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed.” (Acts 19: 20.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Eph. 2: 1-10.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|          |    |       |  |
|----------|----|-------|--|
| July 7.  | M. | ..... | The Holy Spirit Received (Acts 19: 1-7)          |
| July 8.  | T. | ..... | Reasoning and Persuading (Acts 19: 8-10)         |
| July 9.  | W. | ..... | The Hands of Paul (Acts 19: 11-13)               |
| July 10. | T. | ..... | Magic Versus Christianity (Acts 19: 15-20)       |
| July 11. | F. | ..... | When Religion Disturbs Business (Acts 19: 23-29) |
| July 12. | S. | ..... | Sane Counsel (Acts 19: 39-41)                    |
| July 13. | S. | ..... | Steadfastness of Purpose (Acts 20: 18-24)        |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—A.D. 53 or 54 to A.D. 56 or 57.

*Place.*—“Ephesus the capital of the Roman province of Asia; a large and ancient city at the mouth of the river Cayster, about three miles from the open sea. The origin of the name, which is native and not Greek, is unknown.”—*Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible.*

*Persons.*—Paul and the people of Ephesus.

*Lesson Links.*—Our last lesson left Paul and his company in the midst of their work in Philippi. When persecution of Paul and Silas became so severe that neither could remain with safety in Philippi, they went to Thessalonica, leaving Luke at Philippi. Churches were established both at Thessalonica and at Berea. (Acts 17: 1-15.) Paul then went to Athens, but his labors there seem not to have been attended with very great results. (Acts 17: 16-34.) He then went to Corinth, where he remained a year and a half; “and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.” “And Paul, having tarried after this yet many days, took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila.” En route he visited Ephesus. Here he preached in the synagogue, but remained only a short time. Leaving Priscilla and Aquila, he proceeded on his journey, landing at Cesarea. From Cesarea he went up to Jerusalem, saluted the church there, and then went down to Antioch. Had Paul gone from Cesarea to Antioch, Luke could not have said that he went down to Antioch; but from Jerusalem to Antioch was down. This shows how accurate the writers of the Bible were in the use of terms. “And having spent some time there, he departed, and went through the region of Galatia, and Phrygia, in order, establishing all the disciples.” Then he went to Ephesus. While Paul was making this long tour, things were happening in Ephesus. “Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus, and he was mighty in the scriptures.” “He spake and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John.” How much he knew about the personal ministry of Jesus we are not told, but he did not know about the Great Commission—he knew of no baptism save John's. But Priscilla and Aquila led him into the full light of the gospel. He then went to Corinth, bearing letters of recommendation to the brethren there. There is no account given that the people baptized by John or by others during his life were baptized again, unless it be the twelve of Acts 19: 1-7. However, these were likely baptized by someone, perhaps by Apollos,

years after John's death, and therefore after John's baptism ceased to be valid; for if all whom John baptized were rebaptized, of what value was John's baptism?

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### Paul Preaches in the Synagogue at Ephesus (Verse 8)

Apparently there were Jews in every city throughout the whole country. It seems that there were not enough to make up more than one synagogue in Ephesus, as only one is mentioned. Paul used the synagogues as the best place to begin preaching the gospel. It seems that the Jews at Ephesus were not so quick to resent his preaching as they were in some cities; for he "spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the kingdom of God." Paul made no apology for what he preached, nor did he seek to make any compromise. He was not of that type; he preached boldly the gospel of Christ in a house owned and controlled by the Jews. For three months the Jews allowed him to do so; and they would have been glad for him to continue to do so, had he been preaching the sort of kingdom they had been expecting, and which some even now are expecting.

#### Paul Reasons Daily in the School of Tyrannus (Verses 9, 10)

"But when some were hardened and disobedient." Refusing to accept the gospel hardens one against it; and so even the gospel itself hardens the hearts of those who oppose it, but it makes the hearts of those who accept it meek and gentle. The gospel had been preached to these people; they had hardened their hearts against it, and refused to obey it. They had deliberately closed their eyes against the light; nothing more could be done for them. No power but the gospel would be brought to bear on them. In condemning the gospel they revealed what they were. And as is usually the case, they not only refused to obey the gospel, but they spoke evil of it—blasphemed the way. They did this in their public meetings. As the synagogue belonged to these disobedient and blasphemous people, Paul had no choice but to move to another place to preach. This move would serve other useful purposes. It would let the public know that Judaism was one thing, and Christianity another. They would be able to see that the controversies in the synagogue were not mere squabbles among a bunch of Jews. It would get the disciples away from the turmoil, so that they could see more clearly what Christianity was, and that it was not merely an extension of the Jews' religion. There is a significance in the statement that he separated the disciples. It became plain to all that the synagogue was one thing and the church entirely another thing. "Reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus." It would be interesting to know just what arrangements Paul had with Tyrannus. If this man was not a disciple, he must at least have been friendly toward Paul and his preaching. "And this continued for the space of two years." If one thinks of Paul as the only preacher there, and the fact that he taught daily in the school of Tyrannus, he must wonder how all Asia heard the word; yet Luke makes the statement that all Asia heard the word. But we must remember that Paul had a company

of preachers with him, and likely had developed a number in Ephesus. He directed their preaching. He therefore did not himself preach in all parts of the district then called Asia; he could not have gone to all parts of Asia and preached daily in the school of Tyrannus. The statement shows how Ephesus became a radiating center for the spread of the gospel; hence, the wisdom of first planting churches in central cities. This plan, which evidently was God's plan, should be regarded by people today in planting churches. A church in some remote corner might be as good as any, but certainly not in such good position to be a radiating center.

### **Demetrius Calls a Meeting of Fellow Craftsmen (Verses 23-25)**

After Paul ceased his preaching in the synagogue, it seems that the Jews were willing to let him go his way. The fame of Paul was increased by the special miracles which God wrought through him. An incident with which Paul was in no wise connected personally increased the fame of the gospel which he preached; namely, the fate of the strolling Jews who claimed the power to cast out evil spirits. "And this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, that dwelt at Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. Many also of them that had believed came, confessing, and declaring their deeds." This shows that some of the disciples had fallen into evil practices connected with magical arts. "And not a few of them that practised magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all." They did not secretly destroy these books; they wanted the public to know that they were through with such practices. As Paul was making his plans to go on a journey, "there arose no small stir concerning the Way." Paul's preaching was making headway against the worship of idols. Demetrius, a silversmith, saw the trend of things. He and a number of other craftsmen were engaged in making silver shrines of their goddess. These shrines would find a ready sale among the people of Ephesus and the surrounding country, as well as among the many visitors to that city from abroad. It was a source of great gain to these men. Something had to be done to stop the dwindling sale of their goods. Demetrius was either the head of a guild of craftsmen, or the head of a company with these men on his pay roll. There seemed to be no rivalry between him and the men.

### **The Speech of Demetrius to the Craftsmen (Verses 26, 27)**

Demetrius began his speech (verse 25) by saying, "Sirs, ye know that by this business we have our wealth." This does not necessarily mean that the money consideration was the only thing that moved him to take action. There was nothing in his religion to keep him from making money out of promoting it. He could, therefore, revere his idol and its great temple, and yet use it as a means of wealth, and feel that he was doing right. In his speech he bore testimony to the effectiveness of the preaching of the gospel in that country, as well as in Ephesus. "And ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath

persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they are no gods, that are made with hands." To us it seems strange that sensible people, and these were sensible people, would think that an idol, which they had made with their own hands, could be any help to them. They had to make it; if it moved, they had to move it; and yet they depended on it. Paul had taught them that gods made with hands were no gods, and many believed him. Hence Demetrius' complaint: that their trade might come into disrepute, and the temple of their goddess become of no account. It does not seem that these men were hypocrites, caring only for their profits. It is more likely that they had sincere regard for their goddess, and did not want her to be "deposed from her magnificence whom all Asia and the world worshippeth." This was a broad statement—not literally true.

### **The City in an Uproar (Verses 28, 29)**

If Demetrius made his speech only to the craftsmen, they went out and soon had the city in an uproar; but likely that speech was made in the open, so that any who chanced to come might hear. For the purpose it was intended to serve, it was an effective speech. They began shouting, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." There was both pride and devotion in that shout. Concerning the name Diana of the Ephesians, Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible says, "This name is really erroneous, and it is unfortunate that it has become popularized beyond possibility of correction. The goddess meant is Artemis." The reader may verify this by looking at the marginal reading in the American Standard Version, where we have, Gr. Artemis. The temple of this goddess, one of the finest buildings in the world, was the pride of Ephesus. It must be that they sought for Paul; but failing to find him they "seized Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel." With these they rushed into the theatre, which they used for public meetings. The remains of that theatre show that it had a seating capacity of 25,000 to 30,000. In such an uproar it would be filled, for the whole city was in confusion.

### **"Paul Was Minded to Enter" (Verses 30, 31)**

After the riot broke out Paul appeared; a tumultuous crowd, the like of which it is not likely that Ephesus had ever seen, was in the theatre. Two of Paul's beloved companions were in there. The disciples, knowing that nothing could be done with such a wild mob, urged against Paul's entering the theatre. The Asiarchs were men of wealth and influence, who had charge of festivals, entertainments, etc., were Paul's friends. It is not known whether they believed Paul's preaching or just admired him for his courage and ability. They sent a message to him not to enter the theatre. It is likely that the sight of him would have added to the fury of that wild gathering of people.

### **A Confused Assembly (Verse 32)**

This turmoil shows how a mob spirit can banish all reason, and also how easy it is to stir up a mob spirit. The most of these people did not know what the excitement was all about, but they were excited just the same—some yelling one thing, some another. It

shows what emotionalism will do for otherwise sane people, when it has full sway. For the time being, that assembly was bereft of all reason, and were ready for any move that some leader might call for. The student should read the rest of the chapter to see how matters did turn out.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

That the gospel succeeded so well in superstitious Ephesus need not surprise any one. In superstition there is reverence for supernatural things. In fact, superstition is ignorant reverence. By teaching these people the gospel, Paul guided their reverence to the right objectives. Superstition is reverence without reason; rationalism is reason without reverence. It is easier to enlighten ignorant reverence than it is to reestablish reverence in a heart from which it has been banished.

It is said that Alexander the Great offered the people of Ephesus all the spoils of his eastern campaign if they would inscribe his name on the temple of Artemis, but they refused to do it. That temple had been dedicated to the goddess Artemis. They regarded it as her temple, and they would therefore allow no human name on it, no matter how great the name might be. What a rebuke to people of today who place human names on that which they regard as the temple of God! The church is the temple of God; let no human name appear on it.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Ephesus and its temple.

Reverence and reason.

How some members of the church imitate the policy of Demetrius.

How the mob spirit in a group in the church behaves.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

Where did we leave Paul in our last lesson?

Why did he leave?

Give an outline of his journey till the beginning of this lesson.

Give account of some of the happenings at Ephesus before Paul's return.

#### Verse 8

Where did Paul begin his preaching in Ephesus?

To what place did he move, and why?

#### Verses 9, 10

How does the gospel harden some people?

Give some good results from the move to the school of Tyrannus. How long did Paul continue in this school?

How could the gospel have been preached in all Asia?

#### Verses 23-25

Tell about the things mentioned between the two sections of our lesson.

Who was Demetrius, and what stirred him up?

How was he using his religion?

How might people do likewise today?

#### Verses 26, 27

Give the substance of the speech Demetrius made.

Why could he think it proper to use his religion for personal gain?

Is it not possible for businessmen and preachers to do the same?

#### Verses 28, 29

What resulted from the move Demetrius made?

Where did the mob go, and whom did they seize?

What is now known about that theatre?

#### Verses 30, 31

What did Paul attempt to do, and who restrained him?

#### Verse 32

What is said of the assembly?

What does that show as to mob spirit?

Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson III—July 20, 1941

## THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH REGARDING BEVERAGE ALCOHOL

1 Cor. 5: 9-13; Titus 2: 1-8

9 I wrote unto you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators;  
 10 Not at all *meaning* with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous and extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world;

11 But as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat.

12 For what have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within?

13 But them that are without God judgeth. Put away the wicked man from among yourselves.

1 But speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine;

2 That aged men be temperate, grave, sober-minded, sound in faith, in love, in patience;

3 That aged women likewise be reverent in demeanor, not slanderers nor enslaved to much wine, teachers of that which is good;

4 That they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,

5 To be sober-minded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed;

6 The younger men likewise exhort to be sober-minded;

7 In all things showing thyself an ensample of good works; in thy doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity.

8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Ye are the salt of the earth.” (Matt. 5: 13.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Col. 3: 1-14.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|          |    |  |
|----------|----|--|
| July 14. | M. | Choosing Good Company (1 Cor. 5: 9-13)     |
| July 15. | T. | Social Responsibility (Gen. 4: 9-15)       |
| July 16. | W. | Personal Fitness (Dan. 1: 8-16)            |
| July 17. | T. | Not Enslaved to Drink (Titus 2: 1-8)       |
| July 18. | F. | Education for Temperance (Jer. 35: 5-10)   |
| July 19. | S. | Reverence for Personality (Matt. 12: 9-12) |
| July 20. | S. | Building the Kingdom (Gal. 6: 6-10)        |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Some give the date of the writing of both the First Corinthian letter and the Titus letter as A.D. 56. However, some, contending that Paul was released from his first imprisonment in Rome, put the date of the letter to Titus as late as A.D. 67. To give a discussion of these matters would require more space than can be devoted to it in this work.

*Place.*—First Corinthians was written at Ephesus, and probably Titus also.

*Persons.*—Paul, the Corinthian brethren, and Titus.

*Lesson Links.*—All down the ages drunkenness has been a vexing problem, and will likely continue to be, so long as men continue in the flesh; and yet it is so useless, so destructive to self, so expensive, and so annoying to others, that it seems that anybody of intelligence would refrain from it. And yet the drunkard tries to make himself believe that his drinking concerns no one else. If he would think, he would know that his drunkenness is a source of

worry to his friends, a cause of poverty and sorrow in his home, and makes him a potential murderer, if not an actual murderer. But what can the church do about it? The church cannot use force to compel people to do, or not to do, anything; neither can it form an alliance with the government in the use of force to control the actions of people. And yet if the church sticks to its proper work, it is a greater moral force than the civil government can possibly be. The civil government has its necessary work to do; it can lessen crime by destroying some criminals, putting others in prison, and restraining some from becoming criminals; but there is still something lacking. Men need an impelling force within them—something that makes them so determined to do right that they will make any sacrifice that they may do right. The gospel is that force, and the church can and must furnish that force to a sin-cursed world. Sane men act from motive; the church can set before them motives as deep as hell and as high as heaven. The church can put into the hearts of people the regenerating power of the gospel; and by right living can let its light shine. A good church in a community saves some of the people, and exercises a moral restraint over many who do not obey the gospel. Such a church is the salt of the earth, the light of the world. But a church made up of whiskey-drinking, card-playing, dancing members corrupts instead of saves. "Salt is good: but if the salt have lost its saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace one with another." (Mark 9: 50.) And this shows that a church must have internal peace to be effective.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### "Have No Company with Fornicators" (Verses 9-11)

Paul had written a former letter to the church at Corinth, which has been lost. Likely that letter was short, discussing only the matter of fornication. If so, that is the reason it was not copied and circulated among the other churches. Had the letter been of general interest, many copies would have been made for other churches; and in that case some of the copies would have been preserved, and recopied. In charging them to have no company with fornicators, he meant that charge to apply to corrupt members of the church, and not to men of the world in general. Immorality was so general that they would have had to go out of the world to avoid all contact with fornicators. In connection with fornicators he mentions the covetous, the extortioners, and the idolaters. He rates all such characters alike. But it is a sad fact that these sins are not confined to people of the world. If they were, Paul never would have used this language: "But as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner." Notice the list of sins that may be committed by a man that is "named a brother." And yet we sometimes become discouraged by conditions in the churches now, and wish that churches were like they were in the days of the apostles! But there is this difference: If the church at Corinth followed Paul's admonitions, it rid itself of these characters; but not much is done with such characters by churches these days. "With such a one no, not to eat." Paul was speaking of associating with the characters men-

tioned, and not about worshiping in a building where they might chance to be. He was not, therefore, talking about eating the Lord's Supper. We eat with another when we sit down at his table and eat his food. We are forbidden to do this with any man that is named a brother, if he is a fornicator, a reviler, a drunkard, or covetous. We do not eat with others when we eat the Lord's Supper at the same time they do; it is not their table, but the Lord's. Paul was urging them to make all matters of discipline effective by refusing to keep company with those from whom the church had withdrawn. And it is not hard to see what it is to keep company with people.

### **"Put Away the Wicked Man from Among Yourselves" (Verses 12, 13)**

The verses of this section of our lesson is a continuation of the matter of the first eight verses of the chapter. There was a fornicator in their midst, and they had done nothing about it; rather, some were puffed up over the matter. He urges them to purge out such leaven—turn him out of the congregation, and have no fellowship. But the church could not deal with such people who were not members of the church—God would judge them. It was the church's business to judge those who were in it. They were to judge this wicked man as unworthy of fellowship, and to execute that judgment by putting him out. And then they were to conduct themselves toward him in such a way as to make him feel the force of their discipline.

### **"The Things Which Befit the Sound Doctrine" (Titus 2: 1-6)**

"But speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine." For sound the marginal reading has, Gr. healthy; for doctrine—teaching. Paul charged Timothy to hold the pattern of sound words, which Timothy heard from him. (2 Tim. 1: 13.) Here the marginal reading is, healthful, meaning that which promotes health. These are words which applied to physical matters. A man is sound physically when there is nothing wrong with his body, and a healthful thing is that which promotes health. It is easy to apply these ideas to the moral and spiritual man. Sound words are the words of inspiration, to these we must hold. It is unfortunate, and yet the conditions made it so, that some people got the idea that soundness consisted entirely in opposing things. And yet we cannot ignore the Lord's requirements concerning soundness in teaching and in living. What does sound teaching require? "That aged men be temperate, grave, sober-minded." These are some of the things that befit sound doctrine. Temperate—exercise self-control (the word translated temperate here means not intoxicated); grace—not frivolous, but worthy of respect; sober-minded—prudent, not given to fanaticism or rash judgments. And aged men must also be "sound in faith, in love, in patience." His faith must rest on a solid foundation, and be steadfast. He must be sufficiently informed to know what to believe, and sufficiently steadfast to stick to it. A man who is ready to believe any wild theory or speculation that comes along is not sound in faith. To be sound in love is to love that which he should love, and to refrain from loving wrong things. "In patience."

Patience is steadfastness. The Greek word translated steadfast comes from a combination of two words, and carries with it the idea of remaining under. Hence, a patient man is one who will remain under any kind of adverse circumstances without giving up. The patient man holds on when things are lovely, and also when everything else seems to go wrong; he will not quit. If a man does not do so, he is not sound in patience; and if we do not teach aged men these things we do not speak the things that befit the sound doctrine. But sound teaching requires still more. To speak the things that befitted the sound doctrine, Titus must also teach the aged women some important lessons—"that aged women likewise be reverent in demeanor." Gravity and sober-mindedness require reverence. Aged men and aged women are to be reverent in demeanor. It is entirely out of place for aged men and women to be constantly trying to be giddy and frivolous; reverence and folly do not go together. "Not slanderers." Not false accusers. It is the word sometimes used to designate the devil, because he is a false accuser. Hence, the one who slanders another puts himself in bad company—classes himself along with the devil. It is strange that people professing to be Christians need to be warned against being slanderers. If the truth about another is bad, and it becomes necessary to tell it for the protection of others, that is not slander; but to tell of the evil deeds of another in a malicious spirit is very close to slander. The aged women were to be neither slanderers nor enslaved to much wine. Perhaps Titus was specially charged to teach these things to aged women, so that they in turn could teach them to the younger women. "Teachers of that which is good; that they may train the young women." Here we begin to see why Titus was to give special attention to teaching the aged women. If aged women build up a character that the young women respect, they can teach the young women things that no man can teach them. "Train the young women to love their husbands." And the most of them think they already know how to love their husbands—to love them is one thing; to know how to love them is another. It is a fine art, and must be learned. It is also true with reference to their loving their children. Some people are very foolish about their children, and imagine they are loving them. To love a child is to pursue a course with the child that looks to its future good. If a woman loves her child she will teach him to be respectful and obedient; that lesson is a child's birthright. The aged woman must teach the younger women to be chaste, workers at home—virtuous and good housekeepers. "Being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." Many aged women are not in a position to teach the young women to be in subjection to their own husbands, for they themselves are not. But a good mother in Israel that fills all these requirements is a blessing anywhere she may be. There were some things that Titus could not well teach the young women; so Paul directed him to give that duty over to the aged women. But he could teach them one thing, if he himself set the proper example. The younger women likewise exhort to be sober-minded. This does not mean that she may not have a pleasant time; but she must not be frivolous and giddy, nor daring and reckless. It is therefore seen that a Christian, to be sound, must do more than

oppose certain innovations, though he must do that. He might oppose all innovations, and yet lack much of being sound in his character and in his daily conduct.

### Titus Exhorted to Be an Example (Verses 7, 8)

In all things Titus was to show himself an ensample, a pattern, a model of good works. He must not only teach sound doctrine, but he was to be sound in faith and practice. "In thy doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned." No corrupt doctrine should be taught; and he should teach with gravity, and not in a spirit of fun or bitterness. The thing to be accomplished—the salvation of souls—should be in the preacher's mind at all times. He must use "sound speech, that cannot be condemned." Not only the content of a preacher's speech should be such as cannot be condemned, but the words he uses in delivering his speech should be such as cannot be condemned. This rules out foolish jokes and vulgar language. Christianity will not do for us what it was intended to do, nor will it advance as it should, till both preachers and members make their speech and their conduct such, "that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us." "Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Pet. 2: 11, 12.)

### SOME REFLECTIONS

In one column write down all the reasons you can think of as to why a person should remain sober. In a parallel column write down all the reasons you can think of as to why a person should get drunk—not why he does get drunk, but why he should.

Think seriously as to what it means to be sound in faith, in teaching, in love, in patience, and in all acts of life; and then see if you feel like bragging about being sound. One does not have to run a high fever and talk wildly in order to be unsound; he is unsound if his temperature runs too low, or if he has a chill. Some religious people run a high fever, and others have a chill—both are unsound. No matter how sound a person may be in his teaching, he is unsound unless his practice is what it should be. Think on these things.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Dealing with drunken and other immoral members.

The need for sound doctrine.

The need for sound faith and practice.

The preacher as an example.

### QUESTIONS

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

What can the church do about it?  
When is a church the salt of the earth?

#### Verses 9-11

**Lesson Settings**  
Give time, place, and persons.  
Discuss the problem of drunkenness.

What limitations did Paul place on his charge to have no company with fornicators?

With what characters were they to have no company?

What does he refer to in his command not to eat with them—eat what?

When do we eat with another?

#### Verses 12, 13

In what way does the church judge those that are in it?

What is to be done with such wicked characters as Paul mentions?

#### Titus 2: 1-6

What is meant by sound doctrine?

What is the meaning of the word sound as here used?

In speaking sound words, what was Paul to teach the aged men?

Discuss the terms mentioned.

In what also were the aged women to be sound?

Why should the aged women, instead of Titus, be charged to teach the young women?

What were the aged women to teach the young women?

Discuss the difference between being foolish about children and loving them?

What, then, is necessary to make a person a sound Christian?

#### Verses 7, 8

What is meant by the word example?

In what was Titus to be sound?

How may a preacher fail in soundness and gravity?

Discuss the reflections.

### Lesson IV—July 27, 1941

## THE HOLY SPIRIT INSPIRES NEW TESTAMENT LETTERS

Gal. 1: 11, 12; 1 Thess. 2: 13; 2 Tim. 3: 14-17; 2 Pet. 3: 14-16; Jude 3

11 For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man.

12 For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jē'sūs Christ.

13 And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, *even the word of God*, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe.

14 But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them:

15 And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jē'sūs.

16 Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.

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

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

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

3 Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—“Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness.” (2 Tim. 3: 16.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Psalm 19: 7-14.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|          |    |  |
|----------|----|--|
| July 21. | M. | Greetings (Salutation) (Rom. 1: 1-7)           |
| July 22. | T. | Inspired Letters (2 Tim. 3: 14-17)             |
| July 23. | W. | Inspiring Letters (2 Tim. 1: 3-11)             |
| July 24. | T. | The Lamp in the Dark (2 Pet. 1: 19-21)         |
| July 25. | F. | A Word of Warning (Jude 3, 4)                  |
| July 26. | S. | Exhortation to Steadfastness (2 Pet. 3: 14-18) |
| July 27. | S. | Benediction (2 Cor. 13: 13, 14)                |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—For Galatians, A.D. 55; for First Thessalonians, the dates given by different authors range from A.D. 49 to 52; for Second Timothy the dates range from A.D. 61 to 68; for Second Peter, from A.D. 65 to 68; for Jude, from A.D. 64 to 70. It should be noted that the dates given for Second Timothy are based on the ideas that Paul was released from his first imprisonment in Rome, and that he wrote to Timothy during his second imprisonment.

*Places.*—Galatians was written at Ephesus; First Thessalonians, at Corinth; Second Timothy, at Rome; the places where Second Peter and Jude were written are not known.

*Persons.*—Paul, Peter, Jude, and the brethren to whom they wrote.

*Lesson Links.*—A few passages of scripture will enable us to see what inspiration is. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak; and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come." (John 16: 13.) These words of the Savior show that the Holy Spirit would do the speaking and the declaring. "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2: 4.) The Spirit gave them utterance—they did not do their own uttering. The Holy Spirit used their vocal organs to express his own words; it had to be so, for they were speaking languages which they did not understand. Notice such phrases as the following: ". . . to fulfil the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah" (2 Chron. 36: 21); "the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David" (Acts 1: 16); "God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets" (Acts 3: 18); "God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets" (Acts 3: 21); "Jehovah spake by Ahijah" (1 Kings 12: 15); "Jehovah spake by his servants the prophets, saying, . . ." (2 Kings 21: 10). Such expressions could not be used, unless the Lord was using the mouth of the prophet to speak God's own words—he spoke through the prophet. In quoting what Isaiah had written, Paul said, "Well spake the Holy Spirit through Isaiah the prophet unto your fathers, saying, . . ." (Acts 28: 25.) (See a like expression in Heb. 3: 7.) So, what the prophets wrote was said to be spoken by the Holy Spirit. And so it is plain that the Holy Spirit did the talking—the words uttered were his. This had to be when they spoke in languages they did not understand; and it also had to be when, as was often the case, they spoke things they themselves did not understand.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

## Paul Claims Inspiration for Himself (Verses 11, 12)

Paul's enemies, the Judaizers, sought in every possible way to discredit him as an apostle. They sought to make it appear that Paul could not be an apostle on an equality with the other apostles,

but that he was taught what he knew by other apostles. Paul had to defend himself against such charges, or rather, had to defend his apostleship. It was not a matter of defending himself for his own sake; he was really defending the cause which he represented—the right of the Gentiles to the gospel without coming under the law of Moses. Hence, it was imperative that he show that he was an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, and not merely an apostle sent out by some man or group of men. Hence, he began this letter with this introduction: "Paul, an apostle (not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)." Paul tells these brethren that he thus defended his apostleship, "that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." (Gal. 2: 5.) And in the verses of our printed text also he affirms that he did not receive the gospel which he preached to them from man. What he preached was "not after man." It had nothing of the human about it—it all came to him through revelation of Jesus Christ. What he preached was therefore a revelation, and was not arrived at by any human reasoning. But he gives them plainly to understand that his Judaizing enemies were preaching another gospel, or perverting the gospel of Christ. In many other places Paul affirms his inspiration and his divine call to the apostleship. He affirms that when he went up to Jerusalem, the apostles and brethren there imparted nothing to him, but gave him full recognition as an apostle to the Gentiles. (Gal. 2: 6-10.) After Paul planted the church at Corinth his enemies, after he had gone on to other fields of labor, appeared on the grounds, seeking to discredit him. And not only so, but his letters, especially his first, show that some very corrupt teaching was being given in the church. It became necessary, therefore, for him to defend his apostleship to them. "For I reckon that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles." (2 Cor. 11: 5.) "For in nothing was I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I am nothing." (2 Cor. 12: 11.) But might not Paul, or any other apostle, have been mistaken as to his inspiration? Might he not, instead of being divinely called to the apostleship, have been the victim of a hallucination? Not so; for the miracles he performed proved to himself, as well as to others, that he was what he claimed to be. "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty works." (2 Cor. 12: 12.) Had he not performed the signs as claimed, he would not have dared to make such a statement; for none knew so well as they whether his claims were true. He was therefore an apostle, and what he said and wrote was inspired of God.

### How the Thessalonians Received Paul's Preaching (1 Thess. 2: 13)

It was a source of continual thanksgiving on the part of Paul that the brethren at Thessalonica had not doubted his inspiration, but had received the message he delivered to them as the very word of God. They had not doubted his inspiration; they had not doubted his being a messenger of God among them. This message, this word of God, not only led them to believe, but it still worked in them that believed. They had not, like some of the Galatians, been led to doubt it, and to accept something else. (Gal. 1: 6, 7.) In neither letter to

the Thessalonian brethren did Paul find it necessary to make any special defense of his apostleship. They fully accepted him as an apostle. (2 Thess. 3: 4.)

### Timothy Knew the Scriptures from a Babe (2 Tim. 3: 14, 15)

Timothy's father was a Greek, and there is no indication that he was an attendant at the synagogue. (Acts 16: 1.) His mother and grandmother were women of faith. (2 Tim. 1: 5.) They had therefore taught Timothy from the time he could understand—from a babe. They had taught him what we know as the Old Testament, for the New Testament had not been written when Timothy was a babe. Paul calls these scriptures the sacred writings. But how could the Old Testament make Timothy wise unto salvation? By leading him to believe in Christ—"through faith which is in Christ." Timothy was so well taught in the Old Testament scriptures, that when Paul preached Christ to him, he could see in Christ the fulfillment of all that went before. Paul had been Timothy's teacher in the religion of Christ, and he now exhorts Timothy to abide in the things he had been taught.

### The Uses of the Scriptures (Verses 16, 17)

The word "scripture" is of Latin origin, and refers in general to anything written; but its Bible use is confined to the sacred writings—the inspired writings. The force of these verses can best be seen by noticing the Bible use of the term "man of God." The Predestinarians used to make the term refer to any regenerated man, and argue from that notion that the scriptures were only for regenerated men, and were of no profit to the unregenerated man. But the term is found more than seventy-five times in the Bible, and refers to prophets and public teachers. Timothy was a man of God. (1 Tim. 6: 11.) It was his business to lead men to Christ, and then to develop them in righteous living. On what should he rely? what would be profitable to him in his work? In these two verses Paul tells him. As a man of God, he would have to teach the people. The scriptures were his source. Paul affirms that they are profitable for teaching. People need to be taught that God is, that Jesus is the Son of God, and that he came into the world to save sinners; and such they are. The Greeks had two words for reproof, or reprove. One meant to reprove without regard to the effect; the other meant to so reprove as to convince the person, or convict him. The latter is the force of the word here. Hence, the teaching was to be such as to convince, or convict—to make a person see his real condition. And a person must realize he is a sinner before he will make any effort to be saved. But it is not enough to so teach a person as to cause him to see himself as a sinner; he must be shown some way out. Do the scriptures give the man of God any help here? They are profitable for correction—by them man's evil ways may be corrected. To correct a person, is to get him out of the wrong into the right. The scriptures are profitable for that. But he needs more help—he needs to know how to live right after he has been corrected, or converted. The scriptures are profitable for instruction in righteousness—in right living. What more is needed for the man of God in his

work? Does he have to look for aid elsewhere in order that he may be fully equipped for his work? He can use the scriptures in teaching sinners, and in convicting them, and in correcting them; and then the scriptures enable him to instruct his converts in righteousness; it does all this, "that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." That God made a revelation to man is not doubted by any true believer in him. God tells us that this revelation is complete, and nothing must be added to it or taken from it.

### **Some Wrest the Scriptures to Their Own Destruction (2 Pet. 3: 14-16)**

"Seeing that ye look for these things," the things mentioned in the preceding verses, which the student should read. "Give diligence." The Lord puts much stress on the need of diligence. Too many disciples are dilatory instead of diligent. "That ye may be found in peace" when the things mentioned in preceding verses come to pass. When the Lord comes, and all things earthly come to an end, we will want to be "without spot and blameless in his sight." "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation." Long-suffering is bearing with patience the offenses of others. Were it not for the long-suffering of our Lord, no one would be saved. It may be that Peter wrote his second epistle after the death of Paul; at least, his expression—"all his epistles"—shows that many of Paul's letters had been written before Peter wrote his second letter. By the expression, "the wisdom given to him," Peter refers to Paul's inspiration; for Paul certainly did not write to them according to his own human wisdom. In his letters Paul had spoken of the long-suffering of God. (Rom. 2: 4.) In reading Paul's writings we have all experienced the difficulty Peter mentions—"wherein are some things hard to be understood." These things that are hard to be understood are the very passages some people rely on to support some theory, "which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." How often passages in Paul's writings have been wrested in trying to make them teach that a man does not have to do anything to be saved, thus bringing disobedience and consequently destruction on such advocates! And how often the prophecies have been wrested from the uses New Testament writers make of them, in an effort to make them teach some useless and hurtful theory! Thus, the things God gave us for our salvation, some use for their own destruction.

### **"Contend Earnestly for the Faith" (Jude 3)**

Jude makes no special effort to set forth the great fundamental principles of Christianity; that had been well done by others before Jude wrote. His letter is more in the nature of an exhortation and a warning. It indicates that he had seen growing up in the church a spirit of indifference to these fundamentals and a disposition to compromise. The aggressive spirit was not so pronounced as it had been. Hence, he exhorts them "to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." By using the term, "common salvation," Jude did not mean that there was an

uncommon salvation—it was a common salvation, because all might enjoy it. This faith had been fully delivered—once for all—unto the saints; but there would always be need that saints contend earnestly for it.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Why all this controversy about verbal inspiration, for and against? Can there be any other sort? Some contend that the Lord gave his chosen ones the information, and let them express it in their own words; but how could he give them information in the absence of words?

People sometimes become soft and spineless. They do not like contention. There is a certain kind of contention that is useless, even hurtful—a contention about things of no profit; but we are commanded to contend for the faith—to fight the good fight of faith. Paul fought a good fight. If he or some one else had not made that fight, the church would have been one of the sects of the Jews' religion.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

How did Paul and others know that he was not deceived as to his apostleship?

The uses of the scriptures.

Contending for the faith.

The fight Paul made.

### QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.

Discuss the scriptures showing what inspiration is.

#### Verses 11, 12

Against whom did Paul have to defend his apostleship?

Why did he defend his apostleship?

How did the gospel he preached come to him?

What did he say to himself as compared with other apostles?

How did he and others know he was not deceived?

#### 1 Thess. 2: 13

How had the Thessalonian brethren received his preaching?

What was the word still doing for them?

#### 2 Tim. 3: 14, 15

What of Timothy's early training?

How did the sacred writings make him wise unto salvation?

What did Paul exhort Timothy to do?

#### Verses 16, 17

Discuss each item for which the scriptures are profitable.

What class of men were called men of God?

How do the scriptures furnish completely the man of God for his work?

#### 2 Pet. 3: 14-16

What were the things for which they looked?

What exhortation did he give?

Why give diligence?

Give the meaning of long-suffering. What does Peter say Paul had written?

What does he say about Paul's writings?

How do some people use some things Paul wrote, as well as other scriptures?

#### Jude 3

Repeat this verse.

What general idea do we gather from Jude's writings?

What does he exhort concerning the faith?

Is that exhortation heeded today as it should be?

Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson V—August 3, 1941

## PAUL PREACHES FAITH IN CHRIST

Rom. 3: 21-31; 5: 1, 2

21 But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

22 Even the righteousness of God through faith in Jē'sūs Christ unto all them that believe; for there is no distinction;

23 For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God;

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jē'sūs:

25 Whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God;

26 For the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jē'sūs.

27 Where then is the glorying? It is excluded. By what manner of law? of works? Nay: but by a law of faith.

28 We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.

29 Or is God the God of Jews only? is he not the God of Gēn'tiles also? Yea, of Gēn'tiles also:

30 If so be that God is one, and he shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith.

31 Do we then make the law of none effect through faith? God forbid: nay, we establish the law.

1 Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jē'sūs Christ;

2 Through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"As it is written, *But the righteous shall live by faith.*" (Rom. 1: 17.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Rom. 8: 31-39.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS.**—

|        |     |    |                                       |
|--------|-----|----|---------------------------------------|
| July   | 28. | M. | How to Be Saved (Acts 16: 25-33)      |
| July   | 29. | T. | Justified by Faith (Rom. 5: 1-6)      |
| July   | 30. | W. | The Law of Faith (Rom. 3: 21-31)      |
| July   | 31. | T. | The Danger of Legalism (Gal. 3: 1-12) |
| August | 1.  | F. | Living by Faith (Rom. 1: 16, 17)      |
| August | 2.  | S. | Faith and Works (James 2: 14-26)      |
| August | 3.  | S. | Keeping the Faith (2 Tim. 4: 6-8)     |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—A.D. 58, possibly as late as A.D. 59.

*Place.*—Corinth. Compare Rom. 16: 23 and 1 Cor. 1: 14.

*Persons.*—Paul, and the brethren at Rome.

*Lesson Links.*—Faith comes by hearing. (Acts 14: 1; Rom. 10: 14-17.) Faith in a person means more than just to believe that the person exists. It is to have confidence in him—to trust him. You show your faith in a physician when you call him into your home in case of sickness; you give further evidence of your faith in him when you unquestioningly follow the course of treatment he prescribes. If you decide that some of the things he prescribes are not necessary, you really dismiss him as your physician, and become your own doctor; you trust yourself instead of the physician. Some people think they trust the Lord, and call on him for salvation, and then decide that some of the things he prescribes are not necessary. In so doing, they trust themselves, not the Lord; and are trying to

be their own savior. Faith in the Lord leads one to do whatever the Lord commands. It is true that there are degrees of faith. Some people have stronger faith than others, and their faith is therefore more active. We see this daily. The Bible mentions degrees of faith, such as little faith, weak faith, strong faith, great faith, perfect faith, and dead faith. To believe with all the heart means more than some people realize. The heart includes the intellect; with it we think, reason, ponder, understand. (Matt. 9: 4; 13: 15; Mark 2: 6; Luke 2: 19.) The heart includes the emotions; with it we sorrow, despise, love. (Neh. 2: 2; 2 Sam. 6: 16; Matt. 22: 17.) With the heart we purpose, or determine. (2 Cor. 9: 7; 1 Cor. 7: 37.) In the heart is therefore located the power to will. To believe with all the heart involves all of these. Some do not doubt the existence of God, or that Jesus is the Son of God; but they do not love him, and therefore are not determined to serve him. They therefore do not believe with all the heart. When a person reaches the point where he believes with all the heart, he begins at once to do the will of God.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### A Righteousness Apart from the Law (Verse 21)

For a person to have been righteous according to the law, he would have had to keep the law perfectly. Any law justifies a man who keeps it perfectly, and condemns those who disobey it. Because all had sinned, Paul said, "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for through the law cometh the knowledge of sin." (Verse 20.) What then? There must be some other plan of righteousness, or all are lost. "But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested." This plan of righteousness is separate and distinct from the law. It is revealed in the gospel. (Rom. 1: 16, 17.) When is a man righteous? When no guilt attaches to him. When a man's sins are forgiven, blotted out, washed away, he is then righteous, for there is nothing against him. Through this process of cleansing set forth in the gospel, God makes a man righteous; hence, it is called a righteousness of God. It is through the gospel, and not through the law, that a man is thus made righteous. While this plan of making men righteous is apart from the law, it was nevertheless witnessed by both the law and the prophets. The law prefigured it in types and shadows, and the prophets foretold it. But that statement of Paul's is not believed by those who affirm that the gospel plan of salvation was not foretold in either the law or the prophets.

#### The Righteousness of God Through Faith in Christ (Verses 22-26)

This righteousness of God, which may be had by both Jew and Gentile without distinction, is enjoyed by all who believe in Jesus Christ. It is therefore by grace, and not of merit. By the term, "faith," Paul means all that is implied in accepting Jesus as our Savior, Prophet, Priest, and King. When a man is forgiven, or putting it in other words, when a man is cleansed by obedience to the gospel, he is righteous, and is therefore justified, or in a state of justification. This righteousness, or justification, is through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, or by Christ Jesus. What he did

made redemption possible. We will understand this lesson better if we give some attention to the definition and significance of some words.

*Justify.*—To justify a person is to pronounce him just—to declare him free from guilt. When a man is forgiven—his sins blotted out—he is free from guilt. He is then declared just—he is justified.

*Grace.*—Grace is favor, a benefit bestowed without pay. It is the gratuitous bestowal of a thing a person needs. The sinner needs forgiveness. There is no way to pay God for forgiveness; only through his grace is forgiveness possible. No matter how many conditions a sinner must perform in order to be forgiven, it does not destroy the fact, that, on God's part, his forgiveness and justification, are wholly of grace.

*Redeemer.*—One who redeems another from bondage, or liberates one from any condition wherein he is held. Because Jesus frees us from sin and the power of the devil, he is our Redeemer.

*Ransom.*—The price paid for redeeming. Jesus gave his life a ransom for many. (Matt. 20: 28; Mark 10: 45.) "Christ died for the ungodly." (Rom. 5: 6.) "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity." (Tit. 2: 14.) Because Jesus gave himself to redeem man, he is both the Redeemer and the Ransom. No one else can or could redeem us.

*Propitiation.*—To propitiate is to appease, to render favorable. God's law had been violated, his authority had been disregarded, and man was under condemnation. God was not angry in the sense that men become angry. There is, so to speak, such a thing as judicial wrath. The majesty of the law must be upheld; to be just the penalty must be exacted. God's moral government must not fail—sins must be punished. How then could God be just in forgiving sins under the present dispensation, and passing over the sins in the past dispensation? Jesus suffered the penalty—died for us. He bought us with his blood, and therefore we must serve him; but he forces his redemption on none. Many slaves were freed during the Civil War who would not accept their freedom, but preferred to remain with their old masters. And Jesus paid the price for the redemption of many sinners who prefer to remain with their master the devil.

### Glorying Is Excluded (Verse 27)

"Where then is the glorying? It is excluded. By what manner of law? of works? Nay: but by a law of faith." If a man were to live a perfect life, he would have grounds for boasting that he had always done the right thing, that no taint of sin ever soiled his spotless life, and that he stood justified on his own record. The Pharisee who went up in the temple to pray is a fine example of one who thought he had done that very thing. (Luke 18: 10-12.) But none are perfect; all have sinned. In seeing one's self as a condemned sinner, there is cause for humility, but no grounds for boasting. And the greatest grounds for constant humility is the knowledge that an innocent person died to save me from my own folly. Instead of being the proud possessor of a spotless character, the sinner must rely on another person to cleanse him from his own defilement. To trust another instead of self, for salvation, is no grounds for boasting. To believe on him, to repent of one's sins, to be buried in baptism, that a person may be saved, is a cause for

humility instead of pride. But this coming to Christ for salvation is what Paul calls a law of faith. And this salvation through faith in Christ leaves no room for the Jew to glory over the Gentile.

### The God of Both Jews and Gentiles (Verses 28-31)

Notice the marginal reading in the American Standard Version—works of law. "We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law." Paul is not contrasting faith only and the obedience of faith, but he is contrasting justification by works of law and justification by faith. In Rom. 1: 5 he speaks of the "obedience of faith"—that is, obedience of which faith is the source or foundation—an obedient faith. Works of law is an entirely different thing from the obedience of faith. When Paul speaks of faith he means an obedient faith; this he makes plain in the very beginning of his letter. To make "works of law" refer to the "obedience of faith" is to enshroud ourselves in a fog of confusion from which we will not be able to emerge with any clear ideas of the gospel plan of salvation. Let us not think that to accept Jesus as our sacrifice is sufficient; faith is decidedly too limited in scope, if it does not also include submission to Jesus as our king; for Jesus will save no one in whose heart he is not allowed to reign as king.

*Not a Tribal, or National, God.*—The Jew regarded himself as being especially favored of God, and that the Gentile was entitled to nothing, saves as it came to him from the Jews. But in numerous places, as well as here, Paul emphatically contradicts that idea, affirming that God is the God of both Jew and Gentile, without any distinction. The idea that God is a tribal, or national, God finds no place in the New Testament. Faith is necessary on the part of both Jew and Gentile. There is no discoverable difference between being justified by faith and through faith. In the Greek there is no "the" before law in verse 31, as you can see by consulting the marginal reading in the American Standard Version. It does not therefore refer to the ten commandments, but to God's universal moral law, that has always been binding on all peoples. In coming to the Lord for forgiveness of sins, both Jew and Gentile show that they recognize the binding force of that law.

### Justified by Faith—Peace with God (Rom. 5: 1, 2)

"Being therefore justified by faith." Or, literally, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God. Paul had been arguing that we are made righteous by faith, instead of being justified by works of the law. With Paul faith in Christ means the full acceptance of Christ as he is revealed to us, and the faithful ordering of our lives according to his will. They greatly err who seek to prove by Paul that we are justified by faith only, without obedience to the gospel. It is a sound principle of exegesis to find out the use a writer makes of a word or phrase, and then to interpret his language in the light of that discovery. In dictating the New Testament the Holy Spirit frequently used the phrase, "by faith." A few of the examples found in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews will illustrate the meaning of the phrase, "by faith." "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." Every step Abel took and every lick he struck in preparing the sacrifice and building the altar are included in the phrase, "by faith." "By faith Noah, . . . pre-

pared an ark to the saving of his house." That was a huge task, requiring many days of hard labor; but all the toil and labor spent in building that ark are included in the phrase, "by faith." Justified by faith—ark built by faith. Unless a person is willing to contend that Abel's sacrifice was offered the moment he believed, and that the ark was completed the moment Noah believed, he should not contend that the sinner is justified the moment he believes. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down." Here the phrase, "by faith," covers a period of seven days, and included thirteen trips around the walls. The walls did not fall down by faith only, though they fell down by faith. "By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land." Here the phrase, "by faith," spans the Red Sea from shore to shore, and includes all that was done in the crossing. It therefore includes their baptism unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, for they were thus baptized in the crossing. (1 Cor. 10: 1, 2.) So also in our deliverance from sin the phrase, "by faith," includes our baptism into Christ. Proof: "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." (Gal. 3: 26, 27.) Faith is taking God at his word, and doing what he says. By taking God at his word and doing what he said, Noah built the ark. By taking God at his word and doing what he says, we become children of God. As a result of being justified, we have peace with God. There is nothing between God and the one whose sins are forgiven. It is through Christ that we have access by faith into God's grace, or favor. In this state of justification and in this grace of God, "we rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

### SOME REFLECTIONS

There is no conflict between Paul and James in the matter of justification by faith. Paul is showing that works alone, works without faith in Christ, will not save; James is showing that faith alone, faith without works, will not save.

"Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." (Tit. 3: 5.) The washing of regeneration is baptism. Paul was speaking of righteousness that merits justification without mercy. We are not saved in that way; we have sinned and need mercy. The "righteousness" which we have done cannot exclude baptism. It would come nearer to excluding believing and repenting, for these are things the sinner must do—in these he is active; but in baptism he is passive—"be baptized" is the command. It is something to which we submit. Jesus baptizes people through his agents. (John 4: 1, 2.) The Lord baptizes proper subjects now as certainly as he did then, and in the same way—through his agents.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

- Discuss propitiation, redeemer, ransom.
- Discuss righteousness and justification.
- Justification by faith.

## QUESTIONS

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

## Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
How does faith come? Give proof.  
Faith in a person includes what?  
How do we show our faith? Give illustration.  
How do some religious people show that they trust self instead of the Lord?  
Discuss what it means to believe with all the heart.

## Verse 21

When is a person righteous by the law?  
Quote verse 20.  
Discuss verse 21.  
When is a person righteous?  
How does a sinner become righteous?

## Verses 22-26

Give definitions of justify, grace, redeemer, ransom, and propitiation. Why was a propitiation necessary?

## Verse 27

How is glorying excluded?  
How does justification through the gospel exclude boasting?

## Verses 28-31

What is it to be justified by works of law?  
What is meant by the phrase, the "obedience of faith"?  
Show that the Jews are not now God's special people.

## Rom. 5: 1, 2

Quote verse 1.  
Discuss the meaning of the phrase, "by faith."  
Give Bible illustrations.  
Show that justification by faith includes baptism.  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson VI—August 10, 1941

## JAMES TEACHES CONSISTENT CHRISTIAN LIVING

James 1: 17-22; 2: 14-17; 4: 13-17; 5: 12

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning.

18 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

19 Ye know *this*, my beloved brethren. But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

21 Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.  
22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves.

14 What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food,

16 And one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit?

17 Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself.

13 Come now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into this city, and spend a year there, and trade, and get gain:

14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that.

16 But now ye glory in your vauntings: all such glorying is evil.

17 To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; that ye fall not under judgment.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." (James 1: 27.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Psalm 15.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS.**—

|            |    |  |
|------------|----|--|
| August 4.  | M. | The Source of Good (James 1: 16-18)    |
| August 5.  | T. | The Implanted Word (James 1: 19-21)    |
| August 6.  | W. | Hearers and Doers (James 1: 22-27)     |
| August 7.  | T. | God Willing (James 4: 13-17)           |
| August 8.  | F. | The Royal Law (James 2: 1-13)          |
| August 9.  | S. | The Test of Faith (James 2: 14-18)     |
| August 10. | S. | Wisdom and Her Fruits (James 3: 13-18) |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 62.

*Place.*—Jerusalem.

*Persons.*—"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion." (James 1: 1.) He wrote to the Christians among these tribes of the Dispersion.

*Lesson Links.*—James would have been acquainted with Paul's letters, at least, with most of them. In them the great fundamental principles of the gospel had been fully set forth. There was no especial need that James go extensively into such matters. However he did seek to correct some false notions that had sprung up in places. One of these wrong notions was the doctrine of justification by faith only. Evidently some then, as they do now, had abused Paul's doctrine of justification by faith. This is perhaps one point Peter had in mind when he said that Paul's letters contained some things hard to be understood, "which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." (2 Pet. 3: 15, 16.) James begins at once to give instructions and admonitions concerning matters that daily confront every Christian. Often we meet with trials; these trials test our faith; if our faith stands the test, it develops patience—patience is steadfastness. Trials destroy some, and make others stronger. And then there is the exhortation to those who lack wisdom, to ask for it, but to ask in faith. The gospel of Christ is a great leveler; it exalts the poor and humbles the rich and haughty, and brings both into one family.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Every Good Gift from Above (Verse 17)

The same word for gift is not used in both phrases in the Greek. The marginal reading in the American Standard Version shows that the first refers rather to the giving, the act of giving. Hence, every good giving and every perfect gift. There is such a thing with people as a poor giving of a good thing. You may make a really needed gift to the poor, and yet the giving may not be good. To give grudgingly is not good giving, even if the gift is perfect. To give to the needy in a proud, patronizing way is not good giving. To give so as to encourage idleness, or in such way as to humiliate the recipient, is not good giving. Only God's gifts are perfect, and only his giving is always good. His gifts are perfect, and they are

given in such a way as to bring out the best that is in man; for the giving is conditioned on cleaner living. "Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. 7: 1.) It is good giving when the gift makes the recipient better.

### **"Let Every Man Be Swift to Hear" (Verses 18-20)**

Where the King James Version has "begat he us with the word of truth," the American Standard Version has "brought us forth by the word of truth." It simply means that the whole process of becoming a child of God is effected by the word of truth. And it was according to God's own will that thus it should be. Peter affirms that we were begotten again by the word of God. (1 Pet. 1: 22, 23.) Hence, both the begetting and the bringing forth is accomplished by the word of God. That was well known by those to whom James wrote. But the word can accomplish nothing unless it is received into the heart. The important things to be accomplished by the word should make people want to hear it. "But let every man be swift to hear." Not be swift to hear all the gossip and meaningless chatter that goes on, but swift to hear the word of God. From the eighteenth verse to the close of the chapter James is speaking of the word of God and what should be our attitude toward that word, as anyone can see by keeping up with his thread of thought. Because we are brought forth by the word, we should be swift to hear it. That implies that we are to be anxious to hear it—give diligent and anxious attention to it. "Slow to speak." Take time to learn; be sure you are right before you undertake to tell others about the word. "Be not many of you teachers, my brethren." (James 3: 1.) This was to curb the Jewish propensity to talk. Even now it seems that when a Jew comes into the church, he immediately wants to go to preaching, and the brethren now encourage him to do so. Perhaps not so many of them would go wrong, if they were encouraged to study and season their characters before they try to tell others about it. That was the end James sought to accomplish. "Slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." When Jesus spoke the word of God to the people of Nazareth, they were filled with wrath. (Luke 4: 28, 29.) The wrath of the Jews against Jesus because of the word of God which he preached to them resulted in their putting him to death. And so with Stephen. Examples of such wrath are too numerous to mention. Man's wrath, whether directed toward God or man, works not the righteousness of God.

### **On Receiving the Word of God (Verses 21, 22)**

To be swift to hear the word of God, all things that hinder our giving earnest attention to the word, must be laid aside; and there are many things that do hinder the reception of the word of God. Men sometimes build up such a prejudice against some truth that they are filled with wrath when the plain teaching of the word of God is presented to them. People are sometimes so wedded to certain forms of fleshly indulgences, that they will not listen to the word of God; they resent that which condemns their fleshly indulgences. Social and family relations sometimes hinder hearing the word. Some people think they cannot afford to go against their family, nor against those they consider to be their best friends. But

if a person receives the word of God, he must lay aside every hindering cause, and "receive with meekness the implanted word." To be meek toward God is to be gentle toward him, to be submissive to him. Meekness is the opposite of rebellion and stubbornness; it listens to whatever God has to say. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite." (Isa. 57: 15.) "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.) "The implanted word"—the word planted in the heart. This shows that the heart must be receptive—must be hospitable to the word. The word of God thus received is able to save the soul. Peter was to tell Cornelius words whereby he and his house should be saved. (Acts 11: 14.) Through the word of God men are brought forth into a new life, and by it are led to live such lives as result in their eternal salvation. But if a man thinks that knowing what the word teaches and believing what it says will save him without his doing what it says, he deludes himself by such false reasoning. Hearing is important, but it is not enough. In the closing part of his memorable Sermon on the Mount, Jesus shows that it is as necessary to do what he says as to hear it. Through the remaining part of the chapter James shows the need of obedience to the teaching of God's word; and the student should read it with that thought in mind, for in doing so he will discover in it new beauties.

### The Faith That Saves (James 2: 14-17)

There is no lack of harmony between what Paul says, and what James says, about justification by faith. Many and varied efforts have been made by writers to explain what seems to them to be a lack of harmony. Luther did not try to harmonize them. He believed that a person was justified by faith only; because James contradicted that idea, he rejected James entirely. Some have argued that Paul was talking about the justification of the alien sinner, and James about the justification of the Christian. They argue that the sinner must be justified by faith only, without any works, that it may be by grace. But the argument is lame. The Christian must work, they say, to be justified. Is there to be no grace in the justification of the Christian? If works destroy grace, then all grace is gone from the Christian who actively obeys God! Some evidently had wrested Paul's teaching on faith, and claimed that faith without works would save. James denies that in the form of a question: "Can that faith save him?" That sort of faith is as worthless as to say to naked persons, "Be ye warmed," or to hungry persons, "Be ye filled." James is not teaching a lesson on feeding the hungry, but using that language to illustrate the worthlessness of a faith that does not work. And that he was not talking about justification in the sight of men is shown in the question; "Can that faith save him?" That he was not speaking of justification in the sight of men is shown in his referring to Abraham's offering up Isaac, for no man saw that deed. Nor was Abraham counted righteous in the sight of men. And it would seem indeed strange to say that faith without works is dead in the sight of men. A dead faith is dead, whether in the sight of men or out of their sight! And this dead

faith is barren. (Verse 21.) But it seems that too many Christians are depending on faith only to take them to heaven! Faith, whether it be that of an alien sinner or that of a Christian, is dead, barren, if it works not.

### Life's Brevity (James 4: 13-17)

We generally feel too sure of ourselves—too sure that we shall be able to carry out any plans we make. James warns against stating as a certainty what we would do on the morrow, or the year to come, when there was no certainty as to what would occur on the morrow. "What is your life?" What assurance has anyone that he will live for a year, or even till the morrow. And other things besides death hinder our plans; but death is certain, and may come any moment. The brevity and uncertainty of life is strikingly set forth in the Bible. Concerning man Job says, "He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not." (Job 14: 2.) In contrasting the brevity of man's life with the enduring quality of God's word, Isaiah says: "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the breath of Jehovah bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand forever." (Isa. 40: 6-8.) James (1: 10, 11) sets forth life under the same figure of speech; but the most striking statement is found in this section of our lesson: "What is your life? For ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Vapor, or, according to Macknight, smoke, vanishes before your eyes. For that reason we should not be so positive as to what we are going to do, but should say, "If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that." "But now ye glory in your vauntings"—glory in bragging about what we are going to do. How some people do glory in bragging about what they will do! "All such glorying is evil." All this should be plain to anyone. And when people know better than to be bragging and blowing about what they are going to do, they sin in so doing. "To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

### Swear Not (James 5: 12)

It is not certain that James here refers to judicial oaths, for no court would require a man to swear by heaven or by the earth. On a similar statement made by Jesus in Matt. 5: 33-37, McGarvey makes a lengthy comment, a part of which is here given: "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 earth, by Jerusalem, by the head—were all unauthorized by the law. . . . 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. . . . All of these remarks apply with the same force to the parallel passage in James 5: 12." But if a person has any doubts about making a judicial oath, the courts allow him to make affirmation.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

The religion of the Lord Jesus Christ is intended to make men and women better here and now—to fit and prepare them for dwelling with God and the angels in the world to come. This

building of character must be done in this life. Everything in this gospel plan of salvation has that end in view; even the promises contribute an essential part. In this revealed plan God "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: 4.) But how can promises make people better—make them partakers of the divine nature? If the promises were bestowed unconditionally, they would not improve character; how could they? Nor would they improve character, if granted for faith only; for faith only does not improve character. As further proof, discarding man-made chapter divisions, read 2 Cor. 6: 17 to 7: 1. We perfect holiness in order to receive the promises. The promises and the conditions are there clearly stated.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The word of God in conversion of sinners and development of Christians.

Compare Heb. 11: 17 and James 2: 21-23.

Compare Heb. 11: 31 and James 2: 25.

The part promises play in developing Christian character.

### QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

What wrong notion did James seek to correct?

What appears to be the main object of James' letter?

#### Verse 17

Discuss good giving and perfect gifts.

Discuss what is said in verse 17.

#### Verses 18-20

Repeat verse 18.

Tell some things the word of God does.

What are we to be swift to hear?

What does it mean to be swift to hear?

Discuss "slow to speak." Also, "slow to wrath."

Give some examples of wrath at the word of God.

#### Verses 21, 22

Name some things that hinder hearing the word of God.

How must we receive the word of

God?

Discuss the need of meekness.

How does the word of God save?

#### James 2: 14-17

Repeat verse 14.

What illustration does James give to show the worthlessness of faith without works?

Show that James was not speaking of justification in the sight of men.

What does James say of faith without works?

#### James 4: 13-17

What is said in verse 13?

How and why is it wrong to make definite statements about future actions?

What should be said?

How do James and others illustrate the brevity of life?

What is meant by glorying in their vauntings?

#### James 5: 12

Discuss this verse.

Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson VII—August 17, 1941

## PETER ENCOURAGES SUFFERING CHRISTIANS

1 Pet. 4: 12-19; 5: 6-11

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you:

13 But inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice; that at the revelation of his glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy.

14 If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye; because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you.

15 For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men's matters:

16 But if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name.

17 For the time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God: and if it begin first at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?

18 And if the righteous is scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?

19 Wherefore let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator.

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

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

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

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

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

11 To him be the dominion for ever and ever. *Ā-mĕn'*.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“If a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name.” (1 Pet. 4: 16.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 5: 3-12.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|            |    |       |   |
|------------|----|-------|---|
| August 11. | M. | ..... | Taking Up the Cross (Matt. 16: 24-26)   |
| August 12. | T. | ..... | Tribulations (John 16: 33)              |
| August 13. | W. | ..... | Suffering for Christ (1 Pet. 4: 12-19)  |
| August 14. | T. | ..... | The Conquest of Worry (1 Pet. 5: 6-11)  |
| August 15. | F. | ..... | Suffering with Christ (Rom. 8: 12-18)   |
| August 16. | S. | ..... | Fellowship in Suffering (Phil. 3: 7-11) |
| August 17. | S. | ..... | Confident in Suffering (2 Tim. 1: 8-12) |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Date not certain, but estimated to be near A.D. 65.

*Place.*—Babylon. (1 Pet. 5: 13.) But there is no certainty as to whether it was the Babylon of Syria, or of Egypt, or Rome, figuratively called Babylon. Where Peter was when he wrote the letter is of no great importance to us.

*Persons.*—“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.” (1 Pet. 1: 1.)

*Lesson Links.*—It seems that this first letter of Peter was written soon after Nero began his awful persecutions against the Christians. “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold trials.” (1 Pet. 1: 6.) For, “if need be,” Macknight has, “since it is needful,” which seems

better. Already the Jews must have been secretly planning their revolt against the Romans. It is said that they were very severe on any fellow Jew that would not agree to be a party to the revolt. Of course, a Jew that had been thoroughly converted to Christ would not be a party to such a scheme. This subjected them to the persecutions of Nero and of the Jews. Such trials as were these persecutions were a severe test of the Christians' faith, but the reward was and is great. Jesus has said, "Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you." (Matt. 5: 10-12.) It seems that Peter's object in writing these Christians was to encourage them to be faithful in the midst of these persecutions. Peter, then an old man, knew that he must soon suffer death for his faith in Christ; for so had the Lord informed him. (John 21: 18, 19; 2 Pet. 1: 13, 14.) And why would Peter be put to death? Simply and solely because he would not repudiate his faith and his testimony concerning the Christ; and so died thousands of others.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Faith Tested by Persecutions (Verses 12, 13)

The righteous have always suffered at the hands of the wicked. Stephen said to the members of the Sanhedrin and other Jews, "Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them that showed before of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers." The brethren to whom Peter was writing should therefore not be surprised nor think it strange, if they, too, had to pass through a fiery trial. Such a trial would prove them, test them, as metals are tested by fire. Should Christians wonder, therefore, why they are so severely tried? Certainly they should not rebel because of it, nor become discouraged; "but inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice; that at the revelation of his glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy." Paul gave up all earthly things, that, among other desirable things, he might know the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ. (Phil. 3: 8-10.) A Christian should rejoice that he is counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name of Christ. (Acts 5: 41.) If sinners persecute you, it shows that you stand in their way—you hinder their progress in sin. We should therefore rejoice, not only for the reward that is yet to come, but also because it shows that we are having some influence against the forces of evil. If you have never been persecuted for righteousness' sake, it is likely that you are not very righteous. If no one has ever persecuted you for being a follower of Christ, perhaps you are not following him with much zeal. "Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3: 12.)

### Suffering as a Christian (Verses 14-16)

To reproach is to charge with a fault, to rebuke, to censure. Some natures can remain firmer under physical suffering than they can under such heart suffering as reproach, or censure, brings. "If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye." "Blessed

are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." (Matt. 5: 11.) If our conduct is such that people can truthfully say evil things about us, or reproach us for wrongs that we have done, we cannot expect any reward. It is a cause for shame when a professed Christian suffers for sins that he has committed. Yet Christians have feelings; it sometimes requires great effort to keep from being stirred to great anger, and then they are in danger of doing something fearfully wrong. When a Christian knows that he is being persecuted or injured without cause, or lied on without reason, he is likely to do something that will bring reproach upon himself and the cause of Christ. In such times of stress he needs to watch and pray, and remember that when Jesus was reviled he reviled not again. In his trial before the Sanhedrin and also before Pilate, when he was being slandered, lied about, and treated with all sorts of indignities, he was the most calm and serene person of all who were present. He suffered all these things for us, and we are called upon to suffer for his sake. And it is a glorious thing to suffer for him. But "let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men's matters." "Meddler in other men's matters" is a translation of one Greek word. Classed as it is here with deeds that would be crimes against the laws of the land, it also must have been considered a crime punishable under the laws of the land. It was perhaps meddling in an illegal way in the affairs of government; but meddling in other men's matters is an evil in the sight of God, even if it is not done in such a way as to violate the laws of the land. Such conduct is frequently now called snooping. But an exaggerated idea as to their duty and their importance in combatting sin cause some to pry into matters that concern them not at all, and thus they gain the reputation of being snoopers, and so ruin their influence for good. Perhaps Solomon had people of this sort in mind when he gave this advice: "Be not righteous overmuch; neither make thyself overwise; why shouldest thou destroy thyself?" (Eccles. 7: 16.) To suffer as a Christian is to suffer for being a follower of Christ; for the word Christian signifies, not one who is married to Christ, but one who has adopted Christ as his leader and teacher. Those who persecuted Christians had nothing against them as individuals, but solely as followers of Christ. They sought to put down the name of Christ by destroying those who held to it. A professed follower of Christ could escape further persecution by blaspheming the name of Christ. The enemy's animosity was directed against Christ; and that is why, in persecuting Christians, they were really persecuting Christ; Christ was out of their reach, and they took their spite on his followers. For this reason no one should be ashamed to suffer as a Christian—he is suffering because he represents the king of glory. "But let him glorify God in this name." To glorify God in the name Christian is to praise God for being a Christian, and to live so as to make that name glorious among men. It is impossible to glorify God except in his own appointments, and yet we are required to glorify God in the name Christian. Does that mean anything to you as to the origin of that name? Could we glorify God in something that the enemies of Christ invented? Think of this the next time you hear an argument about the origin of the name Christian.

### The Then Impending Judgment (Verses 17-19)

The house of God is the church, the family of God. "For the time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God." There has been some controversy as to what judgment is here meant. If it refers to the last judgment, the judgment of the great day, how could it be said that it begins with us, the Christians? Besides, Peter said, that, at that time, the time had come for this judgment to begin. And there is no indication that Peter had changed the subject of his discourse. He had just spoken of "the fiery trial among you, which cometh upon you to prove you," the bitter persecutions which they were about to endure. Nero would first persecute the Christians; but the unbelieving Jews would suffer the worst. In the war the Romans made against them the Jews everywhere would suffer, but their suffering was worst in Palestine, and especially in Jerusalem. Christians would suffer, but the ungodly among the Jews would suffer worse. "And if the righteous is scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?" It does not seem that this can refer to the final salvation of the Christian, for Peter says, "For thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 1: 11.) Some think Peter refers to the fact that the Christians would barely escape when Jerusalem was about to be destroyed. Whatever judgment, or punishment, is referred to, the lot of the ungodly would be far worse. "Wherefore let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator." We cannot commit our souls to God in doing nothing.

### "Humble Yourselves Therefore" (1 Pet. 5: 6, 7)

The word "therefore" shows connection with what had just been said. Verse 5: "Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another: for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall exalt you." (James 4: 10.) No Christian should be too proud to do any service, however lowly the service may be. That is the real lesson Jesus taught in washing the soiled feet of his disciples; their feet needed washing, and he washed them. There is comfort in this statement, even though we in our shortsightedness may fail to take full advantage of its promise: "Casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you." "Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." (Matt. 6: 34.)

### "Be Sober, Be Watchful" (Verses 8, 9)

"Be sober." Be not intoxicated. Sober, in its secondary, or metaphorical, meaning refers to the disposition, or attitude of the mind—calm, sound judgment, reasonable—not rash or fanatical. "Be watchful." Keep your eyes open; do not let yourself be led blindly into evil or any sort of hurtful things. The devil has all sorts of traps and nets set, and sometimes has them set in hidden places, and baited with things that seem on the surface to be good. Many good men and women have been led into certain lines of activities that seemed to offer opportunity for much good to be done, but after pursuing that course for a time they become weaned entirely away

from the church; at least, they become less interested in the progress of the church. Such enterprises are wiles of the devil. That is about the only way the devil can lead good people astray. He has to bait the trap with something that promises good, but it is the devil's trap just the same. The devil is as persistent in seeking for victims as is the roaring lion, but in his seeking he does not always roar like a lion. Perhaps the devil, like the lion, roars when he seizes his victim. "Whom withstand steadfast in your faith." It requires faith, an intelligent faith, to be able to detect the schemes of the devil, and to thwart him in his purposes. The world, in verse 9, evidently refers to the land of the Jews. Peter is informing these brethren in scattered regions that their brethren in the homeland were faring no better than they. The Jews themselves in Palestine were making it as hard on the Christians in that land as they possibly could. The Jews there were sowing for a terrible harvest which was soon to come.

### To Him Be the Dominion (Verses 10, 11)

The God of all grace is the only one who can give real and abiding favors. After a little while the persecutions would pass away. They would pass away while these Christians, at least, the majority of them, still lived. This is shown in the statement that the God who called them into his eternal glory in Christ, would, after the persecutions passed, perfect, establish, strengthen them. "To him be the dominion for ever and ever." The dominion through all time and eternity would be and is his.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

The following from Macknight: "In the first age the Christians were subject to persecution and death, that their faith being put to the severest trial, mankind might have, in their tried and persevering faith, what is infinitely more profitable to them than all the gold and silver in the world; namely, such an irrefragable demonstration of the truth of the facts on which the Christian religion is built, as will bring praise and honor and glory to God, and to the martyrs themselves, at the last day. For what can be more honorable to God, than that the persons whom he appointed to bear witness to the resurrection of Christ, and to the other miracles by which the gospel was established, sealed their testimony with their blood? Or, what greater evidence of the truth of these miracles can the world require, than that the persons who were eyewitnesses of them lost their estates, endured extreme tortures, and parted with their lives, for bearing testimony to them? Or, what greater felicity can these magnanimous heroes wish to receive, than that which shall be bestowed on them at the revelation of Jesus Christ, when their testimony shall be put beyond all doubt, their persecutors shall be punished, and themselves rewarded with the everlasting possession of heaven?"

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Discuss Matt. 5: 10-12.

The origin of the name Christian.

The significance of the name Christian.

"Be sober, be watchful."

## QUESTIONS

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

## Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
What appears to be the object of Peter's letter?  
Discuss the nature of the persecutions Christians were then undergoing.  
What did Christ say in the Sermon on the Mount about persecutions?

## Verses 12, 13

What charge did Stephen make against the Jews?  
What did Peter say as to the persecutions then coming on the Christians?  
What purpose may persecutions serve?

## Verses 14-16

Give meaning of reproach.  
Why is reproach harder for some to bear than physical sufferings?  
What is a cause for shame?  
Name some things that are hard to bear.  
How did Jesus act under such trials?  
What is meant by the phrase, "a meddler in other men's matters"?  
Why are some good people liable to become meddlers?

What is said about suffering as a Christian?  
Why were Christians persecuted?  
What does the name Christian signify?  
How glorify God in the name Christian?  
What does that show as to the origin of the name Christian?

## Verses 17-19

What is the house of God?  
What judgment, or punishment, began at the house of God?  
How were the righteous scarcely saved?  
What would be the fate of the ungodly?

## 1 Pet. 5: 6, 7

What had Peter just said about humility and service?  
In what way is humility manifested?  
What lesson did Jesus teach in washing the disciples' feet?  
What does Peter say about anxiety?

## Verses 8, 9

Discuss, "Be sober, be watchful."  
Why is watchfulness so necessary?

## Verses 10, 11

Discuss verses 10, 11.  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson VIII—August 24, 1941

## THE WRITER OF HEBREWS EXPLAINS THE NEW COVENANT

Heb. 9: 11-22

11 But Christ having come a high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation.

12 Nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.

13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh:

14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15 And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

16 For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it.

17 For a testament is of force where there hath been death: for it doth never avail while he that made it liveth.

18 Wherefore even the first covenant hath not been dedicated without blood.

19 For when every commandment had been spoken by Mō'sēs unto all the people according to the law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people.

20 Saying, This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded to you-ward.

21 Moreover the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry he sprinkled in like manner with the blood.

22 And according to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation." (Heb. 5: 9.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Heb. 9: 23-28.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS.**—

|            |    |       |   |
|------------|----|-------|---|
| August 18. | M. | ..... | The First Covenant (Heb. 9: 1-10)           |
| August 19. | T. | ..... | The Law Inadequate (Rom. 7: 12-25)          |
| August 20. | W. | ..... | Our High Priest (Heb. 8: 1-6)               |
| August 21. | T. | ..... | The Promise (Heb. 8: 7-13)                  |
| August 22. | F. | ..... | The New Covenant (Heb. 9: 11-22)            |
| August 23. | S. | ..... | The New and Living Way (Heb. 10: 19-25)     |
| August 24. | S. | ..... | Pressing on Toward Perfection (Heb. 6: 1-3) |

### LESSON SETTINGS

**Time.**—Probably A.D. 61 or 62. The contents of the epistle show that it was written before the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem.

**Place.**—Probably Rome.

**Persons.**—Paul; at least the contents of the letter point conclusively to Paul as its author. It was written for the special benefit of Hebrew Christians.

**Lesson Links.**—It is not likely that the early Jewish converts had any idea that the gospel of Christ had superseded the law of Moses, and that the church had now become the temple of God, instead of the temple in Jerusalem. They had not grasped the significance of the following prophecy of Jeremiah: "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more." (Jer. 31: 31-34.) Paul seems to have been the one especially chosen of the Lord to lead the people to a correct understanding of the purpose of the law of Moses, and of the fact that it ended at the cross of Christ. He quotes the foregoing prophecy from Jeremiah, prefacing the quotation with these words: "But now hath he obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second." (Heb. 8: 6.) He had told the Corinthians that the apostles were ministers of a new covenant, and that this new covenant was superior to the old in every respect. (2 Cor. 3: 4-18.) He had told the churches of Galatia that the law was a schoolmaster, or tutor, to bring us to Christ, and that now we are no longer under the schoolmaster.

(Gal. 3: 23-25.) The law of Moses stood as a barrier between Jew and Gentile; so long as it stood, both Jew and Gentile could not be brought together into one body, into one worshipping assembly. Before the gospel could bring about this result, the law had to be taken away. "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." (Eph. 2: 14-16.)

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Our High Priest Enters the Holy Place (Verses 11, 12)

The old covenant had its tabernacle with its two compartments, the holy place and the most holy place. It had a well-defined system of worship, with priests to attend to everything connected with its worship and service. Over all the other priests was the high priest. But the tabernacle, or temple, and its priesthood and worship, full details of which cannot here be given, were leading up to a greater temple, a higher order of priesthood, and more spiritual worship. Our high priest is Christ. "For such a high priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people: for this he did once for all, when he offered up himself." (Heb. 7: 26, 27.) He was not made a priest while the law of Moses was in force, nor was he made a priest before he ascended. "But the word of the oath, which was after the law, appointeth a Son, perfected for evermore." (Heb. 7: 28.) "Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, seeing there are those who offer the gifts according to the law." Jesus, being of the tribe of Judah, could not have been a priest under the law. (Heb. 7: 13.) On the cross he was the victim, not the priest. He received his exaltation when he went to heaven. (Acts 2: 33-36.) Only the high priest could enter the most holy place of the tabernacle, and he passed through the first room, the holy place, in doing so. This tabernacle was like in pattern to the tabernacle in heaven. (Heb. 8: 5; 9: 24.) This tabernacle through which Jesus passed into the presence of God was not made with hands, nor was it of this creation. He passed through the heavens. (Heb. 4: 14.) Through the merits of his own blood he entered into the presence of God, "having obtained eternal redemption."

### The Blood of Animals and the Blood of Christ Contrasted (Verses 13, 14)

Numerous sin offerings were required under the law of Moses. (Lev. 4.) But there was one special day of atonement, when a sin offering was made for all the people. On this day the high priest went alone into the most holy place with the blood of an animal to make atonement for all the people. (Lev. 16.) "For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins." (Heb. 10: 4.) What purpose then did the sin offerings serve? Verse 15 gives some light. The blood of animals cleansed the flesh. The

offerings made saved from physical punishment, but they had also their spiritual value as the next verse shows. But the blood of Christ cleanses the conscience; it washes away sin so that the conscience is at ease. Under the new covenant sins forgiven are remembered against us no more; hence, that, for the time being, clears the conscience.

### **Christ the Mediator of a New Covenant (Verse 15)**

"But now hath he obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises." (Heb. 8: 6.) This covenant was not a renewal of the old; neither was it a revision of the old. The old covenant was taken out of the way, being nailed to the cross. (Col. 2: 13-15.) In every respect the new covenant is better than the old. Christ, the mediator of the new, is greater than Moses, the mediator of the old. Another one of the outstanding differences between the two covenants is this: Every child born of Hebrew parents was by virtue of that birth a member of the old covenant—they became members by a physical birth. As they advanced in years other members, especially the parents, had to teach them to know the Lord. Under the new covenant people must be born again to enter it. They enter by this spiritual birth, and this requires an intelligent acceptance of the Lord. They must be taught before they enter the covenant. And so in this new covenant, "they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them." (Heb. 8: 11.) This shows that no infants are brought into this new covenant. And think what a difference there is between the blood of the old covenant and the blood of the new. There are many other points of difference between the two covenants, which the student may discover for himself; they are too numerous to mention here. The death of Christ was not only for the benefit of those who accept him through the provisions of the new covenant, but it was also "for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant." This was, of course, for those who had been called, those who from the heart responded to God's commands. The rebellious then, as now, received no benefit from the death of Christ.

### **The Testament (Verses 16, 17)**

Some commentators contend that the translators erred in using the word "testament" here instead of the word "covenant," for the same Greek word is elsewhere translated "covenant." The American Standard Version has this marginal note: "The Greek word here used signifies both covenant and testament." But the change in thought seems to demand the word testament, for certainly a covenant becomes of force without the death of the one who makes it. It is argued that the old order given from Sinai could not have been a testament, for there was not the death of the one that made it. Even so, but it was typical and there was typical death. Anyway, the terms Old Testament and New Testament have become so embedded in our speech that the people will never be broken from the use of them. The terms of the will and testament of Christ were dictated to his chosen witnesses while he lived. It was later reduced to writing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Christ chose to

make inheritance under his will conditional. "He became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation." (Heb. 5: 9.) When a will or testament is conditional, the conditions must be met or the inheritance is forfeited. It is to our eternal interests that we keep this in mind.

### **The First Covenant Dedicated with Blood (Verses 18-20)**

The covenant made at Sinai was not the first covenant God ever made with any one; other covenants had been made with individuals, but the covenant made at Sinai was the first covenant God made with the Hebrew nation. And so far as we know it was the first covenant that contained a full set of regulations. This covenant was dedicated with the blood of animals. The sprinkling referred to here is told in these words in Ex. 24: 7, 8: "And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people; and they said, All that Jehovah hath spoken will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which Jehovah hath made with you concerning all these words." It is not here said that Moses sprinkled the book of the covenant, but silence on that point does not constitute a denial; and as the writer of Hebrews says that he did sprinkle both the book and the people, we must accept it as a fact. And according to the writer of Hebrews the blood of sprinkling was mixed with water. But it will be noticed that Moses said that this blood of animals was the blood of the covenant—the blood of the old covenant.

### **The Tabernacle Dedicated with Blood (Verses 21, 22)**

The Bible student should familiarize himself with the making of the tabernacle and its furniture and vessels, the arrangement of the furniture in the tabernacle, and how it all was anointed and sanctified. A detailed account of these things are found in Exodus, chapters 25; 26; 27; 35; 36; 37; 38; 39: 32-40; 40. When everything was finished and the tabernacle reared and its furniture arranged, all was anointed and sanctified. To sanctify anything is to devote it to God. Hence, the tabernacle, and everything connected with it, was devoted to God—it was God's tabernacle. No profane hands were allowed to touch it. If that building cleansed with the blood of animals was so sacred, now much more the church which was purchased by the blood of Christ! "And apart from shedding of blood there is no remission" of sins. We may never understand the full import of that statement; and yet we may be able to see that justice demanded the punishment of the sinner, unless someone volunteered to take the punishment on himself. The penalty for the broken law was death. Jesus, having no sins of his own for which to die, bought the sinner with his own blood. All therefore who accept Jesus as their redeemer by obedience to him have the benefit of his shed blood. But the student will have to read the remaining part of the chapter to get the lesson to which the writer was leading the readers. The copies of the things in the heavens were the tabernacle and its whole system of worship. Christ, our high priest, did not enter into an earthly tabernacle, but into heaven itself, and into that part where God dwells—"to appear before the face of God for us." The high priest of the old order entered into

the most holy place once a year with the blood of animals—not so with Christ our high priest: “but now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

### SOME REFLECTIONS

The new covenant, or the New Testament, is that system of religion which is the sum total of the whole gospel plan of salvation. It was made and then sealed by the blood of Christ. Like any other will, when it became of force, it became unchangeable. We may disregard its provisions, but we cannot change it. It must forever remain the same. This should be plain to anyone who knows anything about a will or testament. Any will has to be destroyed before anyone can become an heir contrary to the provisions of the will. Those who think they can inherit salvation without complying with the conditions set forth in the last will and testament of our Lord and king, should acquaint themselves as to what it means to inherit under a will. The Lord's will has not been declared null and void; it is still in force.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The old covenant taken out of the way.

What is the new covenant?

When did the new covenant begin to be of force?

Contrast the old and the new.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
What was the attitude of the early Jewish converts toward the law of Moses?  
Name some prophecies they had failed to grasp.  
Show that the old covenant ended, and when.

#### Verses 11, 12

Around what did the old covenant worship center?  
Tell about the high priest.  
Quote scripture showing who our high priest is.  
Show that he was not a priest on earth.

#### Verses 13, 14

Discuss these verses.

#### Verse 15

Show from scripture who is the mediator of the new covenant.  
Give some prominent points of contrast between the two covenants.

#### Verses 16, 17

Discuss this New Testament.

#### Verses 18-20

Tell about the dedication of the old covenant.

#### Verses 21, 22

Describe as best you can the tabernacle and its furniture.  
When did it become a sacred or holy thing?  
What of the sacredness of the church?  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson IX—August 31, 1941

## JOHN URGES CHRISTIAN LOVE

1 John 3: 13-18; 4: 7-21

13 Marvel not, brethren, if the world hateth you.  
 14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death.

15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

16 Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 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?

18 *My* little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth.

7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God.

8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

9 Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him.

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

12 No man hath beheld God at any time: if we love one another, God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us:

13 Hereby we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

14 And we have beheld and bear witness that the Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

15 Whosoever shall confess that Jē'sūs is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God.

16 And we know and have believed the love which God hath in us. God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him.

17 Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, even so are we in this world.

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath punishment; and he that feareth is not made perfect in love.

19 We love, because he first loved us.

20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen.

21 And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth." (1 John 3: 18.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Heb. 13: 1-8.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|            |    |   |
|------------|----|---|
| August 25. | M. | Twofold Fellowship (1 John 1: 1-4)      |
| August 26. | T. | Conditioned Fellowship (1 John 1: 5-10) |
| August 27. | W. | Abiding in the Light (1 John 2: 7-11)   |
| August 28. | T. | Loving in Deed (1 John 3: 17-24)        |
| August 29. | F. | Knowing God (1 John 4: 7-14)            |
| August 30. | S. | The Test of Our Love (1 John 5: 1-4)    |
| August 31. | S. | We Know (1 John 5: 18-21)               |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Not known.

*Place.*—Where John was when he wrote this letter is not known.

*Persons.*—The apostle John and the Christians everywhere.

*Lesson Links.*—Many Christians have favorite chapters and subjects; these they ponder over to the neglect of other chapters and

subjects. To allow ourselves—our feelings and prejudices—to lead us to give preference to certain chapters and subjects prevents our acquiring a correct understanding of the Bible, and also prevents our developing a well-balanced character. The Christian should strive not to become biased or lopsided. Many, if not all, errors among professed Christians grow out of a wrong conception of God and his attitude toward man. A failure to see how God could be an absolute sovereign, and yet man be a free moral agent, led to the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation, and to the kindred doctrine that God foreordains whatsoever comes to pass. And emphasizing the truth that God is love, and ignoring the truth that he is also a God of justice and of vengeance, led to the doctrine of universal salvation. We should let both of the following statements have their due weight: "God is love"; and, "Our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. 12: 29.) To ignore either statement is dangerous. And the idea that God must be reconciled to the sinner gave rise to the long hours that people used to spend at the mourners' bench, praying for God to save the anxious mourners. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son to save men, but he did not so love them that he will save those who will not believe in that only begotten Son. Jesus so loved men that he suffered much for them even before he came to the cross. His conduct among men is the best illustration of what love really is. Love is not a gushy sentiment; it is a very practical thing. Love looks to the ultimate good of the object loved, and not to present gratification. Because Jesus loved men, he was fully set against everything that was hurtful to man. He was gentle toward the weak and erring, but denounced in severest terms the self-righteous bigots who were leading the people astray. And let us not forget that he left us an example that we should walk in his steps. Had Jesus not loved men he would have left these blind guides alone. Think on these things.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### Love as Evidence of Spiritual Life (Verses 13, 14)

Read verses 11 and 12: "For this is the message which ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another: not as Cain was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous." There is something about deep-rooted sin that makes the sinner not only hate righteousness, but the one who practices righteousness. Hence, the admonition: "Marvel not, brethren, if the world hateth you." To his unbelieving brethren Jesus said, "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that its works are evil." (John 7: 7.) "If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me before it hated you." (John 15: 18.) "I have given them thy word; and the world hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (John 17: 14.) Notice the assurance with which John speaks: "We know that we have passed out of death into life." Death and life are here spoken of as two states or kingdoms. Where sin reigns, death also reigns—we have passed out of that state into spiritual life—life in Christ. The evidence that we have made this change: "Because we love the brethren." Here love is a practical thing, and not merely a feeling, an emotion, or a sentiment. Let us not be deceived about loving

the brethren, or the children of God. John gives us a test, so that we need not be mistaken as to whether we love the brethren: "Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." (1 John 5: 2, 3.) If, therefore, we do not live as God commands us to live, we love neither God nor the brethren.

### Hate and Love Contrasted (Verses 15, 16)

Hate, as here spoken of, is an intense feeling of dislike, a feeling so strong as to desire harm to befall the object hated. As such feeling often leads to murder, as in the case of Cain, the one who thus hates is at heart a murderer. He has, so to speak, stained his heart in blood, even though he has not thus stained his hands. "And ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." Hate, like other passions, is hard to conceal. "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us." And that which makes this love so wonderful is the fact that he laid down his life for his enemies. "But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5: 8.) It is not likely that anyone now will be called upon to die instead of his brother; but we may be called on to risk our lives in service to others, and this risk may sometimes bring death. If our services are needed, we should not hesitate. When the need arises, "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." We should devote our lives to the service of others, instead of scheming to have others serve us. Herein our love is tested.

### Love in Deed and Truth (Verses 17, 18)

If a man can help those who need, and refuses or neglects to do so, the love of God does not abide in him. A call for service that requires a sacrifice is a test of love. Love sacrifices; the amount of sacrifice one is willing to make measures the strength of his love. If we have this world's goods and do nothing to supply the needs of others, we are far from having the spirit of Christ, and the love of God is not in us. The eighteenth verse presents a peculiar figure of speech—one thing is apparently denied in emphasizing another. Jesus used the same form of expression: "Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life." (John 6: 27.) By that form of speech Jesus meant to emphasize the truth that the food which abideth unto eternal life is more important than the food which sustains temporal life. He did not mean to prohibit working for our daily food, but to emphasize the greater importance of the other food. The same form of speech is found in 1 Pet. 3: 3, 4. John did not mean that we should not speak words of teaching, or comfort, or encouragement, or even words of sympathy; but that our interest in others should not be shown in words only. If you can do good by the use of words, use them; but words will not feed the hungry nor clothe the naked. Deeds are sometimes more important than words; we should love in deeds as well as in words. And whatever we do should be done in all sincerity, as servants of God, and never that we may gain the applause of men. "When therefore thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward." (Matt. 6: 2.)

### God Is Love (1 John 4: 7, 8)

John had just given a test by which they might know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. If a man hears what God's inspired men say, he has the spirit of truth. One who loves the truth has the spirit of truth; such a one will also love God's children. One cannot love the truth and hate those who stand for it. "Love is of God," and yet not all love is of God. Some things we must not love. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2: 15.) To be begotten of God is to be a child of God; and if a man is really a child of God, he loves God and also the children of God. "God is love." And yet that statement does not fully state the nature or attributes of God. The heathen, having no God revealed to them, fix up gods to suit themselves. There is danger that we, with a Bible in our hands, do the same thing. To ignore some things that are said about God, and attribute to him just such parts as suits our ideas as to what we think God should be, is virtually to make a god of our own. God is love, but God also hates some things. "There are six things which Jehovah hateth; yea, seven which are an abomination unto him." (Prov. 6: 16-19.) "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate." (Rev. 2: 6.) If a person does not hate false doctrine, he does not love the truth; and if he does not hate sin, he does not love righteousness. And just here it is hard for us to keep ourselves well balanced.

### How God Manifested His Love (Verses 9-11)

The Greeks had two words for love, and that enabled them to express shades of meaning that our one word for love does not express. One word expressed more of sentiment or feeling; it expressed the love that man and wife have for each other, or that friend has for friend. It came by association, and grew up in the heart unbidden. The other word is the one used to express our love for God, for his word, for his church, and for all men in general. It expressed an attitude rather than an emotion, or feeling. It is a love that is subject to the will. It is the love God manifested to the world in sending his Son to be a propitiation for our sins. To propitiate is to render favorable—the death of Christ made it possible for God to be just in justifying the sinner.

### The Invisible God Dwells in Us (Verses 12-16)

Men have seen angels whom God sent to represent him, and they have seen the Son who is the express image of the Father; in these senses they have seen God; but no one has seen the glorious Being. And herein is a strange thing. Though no man has seen God, yet he dwells in us. But for that matter, no one has seen his own spirit. And we also abide in him. Perhaps the statement that he has given us of his Spirit refers to the miraculous powers of the Spirit conferred on certain ones. The presence of such powers would be strong evidence of God's presence with them. In verse 14 John calls attention to the fact that he and others were witnesses that the Father had sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Having seen him before his death and after he was crucified, they could give convincing testimony concerning him. To confess Jesus as the

Son of God means more than to speak words to that effect; we must do so in a practical way—must acknowledge him to be the Son of God by yielding ourselves in obedience to him. Words without obedience mean very little. We do not really acknowledge him to be the Son of God till we give ourselves into his service.

### Perfect Love Casteth Out Fear (Verses 17, 18)

By fulfilling the duties to God and man that love requires of us, love is made perfect in us. Love grows by service; and this love should grow so that we may have boldness in the day of judgment. But this boldness must not be of the arrogant, demanding type; but the sort that recognizes that God is merciful to those whose hearts are right. As he is holy, just, and righteous, so are we who are yet in the world, if we fulfill the obligations of love. "There is no fear in love." Fear is not a component part of love; and yet there is a kind of fear, reverential fear, that should dwell in the heart of every child of God. The fear that John here mentions is the fear that has torment. It seems that fear does much toward moving people to become Christians, but perfect love casts out fear. However, no one has perfect love at the beginning of his efforts to be a child of God; but fear diminishes as he nears the eternal shores.

### A Pretender Is a Liar (Verses 19-21)

"We love"—we love God and the brethren—because he first loved us. In so loving the world as to give his only begotten Son to die that men might be saved, God showed us what love really is. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar." He is a liar, because a man cannot love God while hating his brother. The beloved John speaks very emphatically here as elsewhere. "And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also."

### SOME REFLECTIONS

It is so easy for human beings to get a one-sided view of things; but a Christian should strive to see things as God sees them. Love is the most helpful and practical attribute that a person can acquire, but we should not mistake its demands. Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Again, "If a man love me, he will keep my word." (John 14: 21, 23.)

Love for one thing demands hatred for its opposite. "O ye that love Jehovah, hate evil." (Psalm 97: 10.) Again David says, "Oh how love I thy law!"—"I hate every false way." (Psalm 119: 97, 104.) "Hate the evil, and love the good." (Amos 5: 15.) "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." (Rom. 12: 9.) Such are the attitudes God directs us to have toward these opposites; and we cannot afford to ignore these demands.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

How God showed us what love really is.

How we should love the brethren.

What it is to love the truth.

Why Jesus so bitterly opposed false leaders and teachers.

## QUESTIONS

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

## Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
Why not have favorite chapters and subjects?  
Tell how some errors and wrong practices originate.  
To what extent did God love the world?  
Why did Jesus oppose false doctrine and false teachers?

## Verses 13, 14

Repeat verses 11 and 12.  
Discuss the world's hatred of Christians.  
Discuss verse 14.

## Verses 15, 16

What is said about hate?  
What really shows us what love is?  
How much then should we love the brethren?

## Verses 17, 18

What is said about the one who has this world's goods?

Discuss verse 18.  
Give some examples of similar sentences.  
What did Jesus say about doing alms?

## 1 John 4: 7, 8

How may we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error?  
What must we not love?  
"God is love"—name some things he hates.

## Verses 9-11

Discuss these verses.

## Verses 12-16

What is said about seeing God.  
What is a witness?  
Who were witnesses?  
What does it mean to confess Jesus as the Son of God?

## Verses 17, 18

How is love made perfect in us?  
What is said of fear?

## Verses 19-21

Why do we love?  
Who does John say is a liar?  
Why is such a one a liar?  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson X—September 7, 1941

## REVELATION: A MESSAGE TO PERSECUTED CHURCHES

Rev. 2: 1-11

1 To the angel of the church in Eph'ē-sūs write: These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, he that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks:

2 I know thy works, and thy toil and patience, and that thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them that call themselves apostles, and they are not, and didst find them false;

3 And thou hast patience and didst bear for my name's sake, and hast not grown weary.

4 But I have *this* against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love.

5 Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works; or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent.

6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the works of the Nic-ō-lā'ī-tāns, which I also hate.

7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

8 And to the angel of the church in Smŷr'nā write: These things saith the first and the last, who was dead, and lived *again*:

9 I know thy tribulation, and thy poverty (but thou art rich), and the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

10 Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.

11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.” (Rev. 2: 10.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 34: 15-22.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|              |    |   |
|--------------|----|---|
| September 1. | M. | A Vision on the Lord's Day (Rev. 1: 9-20) |
| September 2. | T. | Toil and Patience (Rev. 2: 1-7)           |
| September 3. | W. | Faithful Unto Death (Rev. 2: 9-11)        |
| September 4. | T. | God Knows (Rev. 2: 18, 19)                |
| September 5. | F. | Imperfect Works (Rev. 3: 1-6)             |
| September 6. | S. | The Open Door (Rev. 3: 7-13)              |
| September 7. | S. | Knocking at the Door (Rev. 3: 14-22)      |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Not certainly known. Some put the date as early as A.D. 67 or 68; others as late as A.D. 96 or 97.

*Places.*—Patmos, “a rugged and bare island in the Aegean Sea, twenty miles south of Samos and twenty-four miles west of Asia Minor.” Ephesus, “the capital of the Roman province of Asia, and an illustrious city in the district of Ionia, nearly opposite the island of Samos.” Smyrna, forty miles north of Ephesus.

*Persons.*—The apostle John and the seven churches mentioned in Rev. 1: 10. Our lesson has to do especially with the churches at Ephesus and Smyrna.

*Lesson Links.*—“I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet saying, What thou seest, write in a book and send it to the seven churches: unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamum, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.” When John turned to see the one who was speaking to him, he beheld a glorious being walking in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, holding in his right hand seven stars. “And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead.” This glorious being identified himself by saying, “Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. Write therefore the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter. . . . The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks are seven churches.” A church is here represented as a candlestick. It is a striking figure. A candlestick gives no light, but it upholds that which does give the light. The word of God is the light, and the church upholds it. The church enlightens the people by teaching them the word—“holding forth the word of life.” (Phil. 2: 15, 16.) An angel is a messenger. The Greek has the word angel and angels in such passages as Luke 7: 24, 27; 9: 52; James 2: 25. An angel of God is a messenger of God. The angels of John (Luke 7: 24) were the messengers John sent to Jesus. An angel of a church is a messenger sent by a church. The seven angels of the seven churches were messengers of these seven churches. And this may give us some light as to why letters were sent to seven churches in Asia and not to all the churches in that section. John was on the isle of Patmos.

Nothing would be more natural than for these churches to send men to John with words of comfort and perhaps material assistance. By these messengers John would send what he had written to the churches.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### The Introduction to the Letter to Ephesus (Verse 1)

The beginning of the church at Ephesus is recorded in Acts 18: 18-28; 19: 1-20. Later Paul made a speech to the elders of this church, in which he warned them of future troubles. (Acts 20: 17-35.) Later he left Timothy at Ephesus to correct certain evils in the church. (1 Tim. 1: 3, 4.) Now the Lord is having John to write a letter to this church; the Lord himself dictates the letter. And here we have again the word angel, about which there has been much curious speculation. Some say that every church has a guardian angel; but these letters were to be sent to the churches and not to an invisible spirit. Some say that the angel was the presiding bishop of the church, but it does not seem that the churches then had such a bishop. But a common sense view will be helpful. John had to send these letters by somebody who would be interested in seeing that they fell into the proper hands. And who would be so convenient and reliable as these angels, or messengers, for these churches. The context and the circumstances must determine whether a construction like we have here should be translated to, for, from, in, by, etc. If we read, "By the angel of the church in Ephesus write," the whole matter becomes clear. And in reading these letters it will be noticed that Christ introduces himself to each church with a different description of himself. He holds the stars in his right hand—he would see that no harm befell them in their return journey. He walks amidst the candlesticks. He therefore knows the churches—nothing is hidden from him.

### The Lord Commends the Good Deeds of the Church (Verses 2, 3)

*Their Works and Toil.*—"I know." The Lord was not finding fault with their work, but commending it. The church at Ephesus was a working church. So many people think that a working church is a good church. Of course, a church must work or it is worthless. But there was toil about the work which Ephesus had been doing. Toiling is working under difficulties. There is no toil in pleasant work. When the church is at peace, the Lord's day worship what it should be, and everybody willing to do his part, and you are busy in the Lord's work, the Lord is pleased; but there is no toil about that work—it is delightful. But when everything seems to go wrong—the church is in confusion, the neighbors regard it as a fussing bunch of senseless cranks, the singing is poor, the talks dry and rasping, your best efforts to save the church are misunderstood and denounced—and yet, in spite of it all, you do your best to please the Lord, there is toil about that sort of work. The church at Ephesus had worked under severe trials and difficulties—it had toiled; and the Lord commended them for it.

*Patience.*—The Lord commended their patience. What is patience? Patience is a heroic quality! it is not the calm, nonresisting state of mind that some seem to think. "Ye have heard of the patience

of Job," says James. And so have we all. And it is well to read the book of Job, and see what made him an outstanding example of patience. It was certainly not because he calmly submitted without protest to whatever came along. He fumed and fussed, and spoke harshly to his "friends," and abruptly to his wife; his patience is seen in his steadfast holding to the Lord when everything seemed to go wrong. "Though he slay me, yet will I wait for him." He would not give up; he would not quit.

The church at Ephesus was so patient that it could not bear evil men! Some had come into their midst claiming to be apostles. The church knew what an apostle should be. They tried these pretenders, and found them false. This does not mean that they had what is usually called a "church trial." Those who knew what an apostle should be put them to the test, and found them false. How many churches these pretenders had fooled we know not, but Ephesus was awake and watchful. Pretenders are hypocrites—frauds—and the Lord is severe on such characters; and so he commended Ephesus for keeping frauds from imposing on them. It is a sad day for a church when proceedings of that sort are ruled out. Responsibility for keeping out false teachers rests primarily on the elders. The patience of the church had led them to endure much for the name of the Lord without growing weary. So far not a word of adverse criticism had been uttered, but only words of praise. And we can imagine that the letter up to this point made the church well pleased with what they were doing. We can feel sure that, when it had been noised abroad that a letter from the Lord to that church had been received and would be read at the next meeting, every member would be present.

### **The Church Had Left Its First Love (Verses 4, 5)**

As this letter was being read, we can imagine the members were feeling good over the words of praise from the Lord; but the church could be praised only in part. The Lord gives praise when praise is due; he is also faithful in rebuking when rebuking is due. "But I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love." They did not love as they had formerly done. They had worked and toiled, had ousted pretenders, and had been true to the name of Christ in the midst of trials; yet there was a vital element lacking. They had cultivated a hatred for frauds and evil works, but had allowed their love to grow cold. The Christian must hate and oppose the evil, but must not let it become so absorbing as to leave no capacity for loving the good. Combatting pretenders and false doctrine is necessary, but that is not all there is to Christian character. The farmer must grub the sprouts and keep down the weeds, but he must also plant and cultivate. Because the church at Ephesus had failed at this point, the Lord called on them to repent. They had not developed a balanced character. If they did not repent, the Lord would remove their candlestick—he would cease to recognize them as his church.

### **The Promise to the Overcomers (Verses 6, 7)**

The Lord commends them for hating the works of the Nicolaitans—the Lord hated their works also. The first sentence of the seventh verse shows that these letters to the seven churches were meant

to be read and heeded by all who would give attention to what was said. The overcomer would have the right to eat of the tree of life which now grows in the paradise of God.

### The Lord Knows Smyrna's Difficulties (Verses 8, 9)

The Lord introduces himself in this short letter to Smyrna as "the first and the last, who was dead, and lived again." It seems that the tribulation mentioned was trouble brought upon them by the Jews. These Jews were Jews after the flesh, but had no right to be regarded as real Jews. They had a synagogue; but instead of its being a synagogue to promote righteousness, it was a synagogue of Satan. They were doing the work of Satan in that city. The church was poor, and yet rich. They were evidently poor in this world's goods, but they were rich in Christian virtues and in the fact that they were heirs of God. To be a child of God is to be as rich as one can possibly be.

### "Fear Not" (Verse 10)

Some additional persecutions were about to break loose on the church at Smyrna; this forewarning would help the church to brace itself against its destructive force. The devil in person would not cast them into prison; he would do that through the agency of those who hated the church. The devil works through people; and he frequently so deceives them as to make them believe they are doing God service. On the night of his betrayal Jesus said to his disciples, "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God." (John 16: 2.) Saul of Tarsus is a striking example of this truth. "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And this I also did in Jerusalem: and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death I gave my vote against them." (Acts 26: 9, 10.) The devil meant to make it so uncomfortable for Christians that they would quit; but the Lord meant that by these imprisonments the saints at Smyrna would be tried—tested. "And ye shall have tribulation ten days." Some think that the "ten days" merely represented a short period of time; others think each day represented a year. But as the language applied only to Smyrna, we do not need to contend about how long a time was meant. And the main thing for them to do was to trust the Lord and be faithful to him even unto death; for in so doing a crown of righteousness awaited them. That crown depends on their faithfulness. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing." (2 Tim. 4: 7, 8.)

### Ears to Hear What the Spirit Says (Verse 11)

Though they have ears, some people will not hear what the Spirit says. "Hearing they hear not." Jesus quotes Isaiah as follows: "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand

with their heart, and should turn again, and I should heal them." (Matt. 13: 15.) People who do not give attention to what the Lord says do not really hear him. In these seven letters the Lord speaks to the churches of today. "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." We are told about the second death in Rev. 20: 11-15.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Grubbing up false doctrines and unscriptural practices is as essential as grubbing up noxious growths in the field; but a farmer can impoverish himself by putting in all his time grubbing. And the man who puts in all his time in opposing false doctrine and exposing wrong practices will impoverish his character. The fundamental doctrine, or teaching, is the framework around which the Christian character is built. The framework must be there, or the character will not stand up; the gentler graces must be built around that framework, or the person is harsh and unattractive.

The letters reveal the condition of the churches then, and show them to be little, if any, better than churches are now. These churches, as some claim, do not represent different periods in church history. That idea is a conceit with no foundation in facts then existing, or that history developed. Does anyone really think that the Lord made these churches to fit certain periods of history, or else made certain periods to correspond with the conditions in those churches?

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

How a church functions as a candlestick.  
The good points in the church at Ephesus.  
Wherein Ephesus failed.  
Being poor, yet rich.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Locate Patmos.  
Give the events leading up to the writing of the seven letters.  
Why would a church be called a candlestick?  
Who were the stars?

#### Verse 1

Tell about the beginning of the church at Ephesus.  
How could John send letters to the seven churches?

#### Verses 2, 3

What complimentary things did the Lord say to Ephesus?  
Discuss the difference between works and toil.  
What is patience?  
Discuss Job as an example of patience.  
What had the church done about pretended apostles?

#### Verses 4, 5

What was wrong with the church at Ephesus?  
Discuss the development of a well-balanced character.  
Why is it necessary to combat pretenders and false doctrine?

#### Verses 6, 7

Discuss verses 6, 7.

#### Verses 8, 9

Locate Smyrna.  
What is said of the Jews in Smyrna?  
How could Smyrna be both poor and rich?

#### Verse 10

What was about to happen to the church at Smyrna?  
What did Jesus say about those who would kill disciples?  
Give an illustration of what he said.  
How does the devil persecute Christians?  
What purpose does persecution serve?  
What is the reward to those who remain faithful?

#### Verse 11

Discuss verse 11.  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson XI—September 14, 1941

## THE ETERNAL GOD, THE SOURCE OF HELP

Rev. 7: 9-17

9 After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And they cry with a great voice, saying,

Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11 And all the angels were standing round about the throne, and about the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

12 Saying,

A-mēn': Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. A-mēn'.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, These that are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and whence came they?

14 And I say unto him, My lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat:

17 For the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—*"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come."* (Rev. 4: 8.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Isa. 41: 8-14.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS.**—

|               |    |       |  |
|---------------|----|-------|--|
| September 8.  | M. | ..... | The Lord God (Rev. 4: 1-11)            |
| September 9.  | T. | ..... | A Vision of God (Isa. 6: 1-6)          |
| September 10. | W. | ..... | Invincible in God (Jer. 1: 13-19)      |
| September 11. | T. | ..... | Divine Security (Jer. 17: 5-8)         |
| September 12. | F. | ..... | A Source of Help (Isa. 40: 27-31)      |
| September 13. | S. | ..... | The Strength of Life (Psalm 27: 1-3)   |
| September 14. | S. | ..... | The Everlasting Arms (Deut. 33: 25-27) |

## LESSON SETTINGS

**Time.**—Not certainly known. Some put the date as early as A.D. 67 or 68; others, as late as A.D. 96 or 97.

**Place.**—The isle of Patmos.

**Persons.**—John, God the Father, the Lamb of God, angels, and a host of the redeemed.

**Lesson Links.**—After the first vision in which John was instructed to write letters to seven churches, another scene opens up to him. "After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and the first voice that I heard, a voice as of a trumpet speaking with me, one saying, Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must come to pass hereafter. Straightway I was in the Spirit." (Rev. 4: 1, 2.) John was enabled to behold things that were taking place in heaven. There has been much discussion as to the time in which John saw the visions of the book of the Revelation, and also much discussion as to the time in which the things John saw were to occur. The first verse of the book seems to be definite as to the

time. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show unto his servants, even the things which must shortly come to pass." And verse 19 seems to indicate a continuation of events which had begun before John wrote. "Write therefore the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter." This seems plainly to indicate a succession of events without any break. If that be so, then it follows that the things which were to come to pass after John saw the vision continued to occur from the time of the vision. It does not therefore seem possible that the events which were to occur after John wrote, have not yet begun to occur, as some claim. If we knew the time when John was on the isle of Patmos, we could the more easily place some of the events outlined in his visions. Tradition as to the time of events in that remote period are not very reliable. The internal evidence as to the time the book was written seems plainly to indicate that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, during the reign of Nero. Counting from Julius Caesar, Nero was the sixth emperor. (Rev. 17: 10.) Apparently the temple was still standing in Jerusalem, and that city was about to be brought under the control of the Gentiles. (Rev. 11: 1, 2.) Many authorities therefore conclude that John was on the isle of Patmos in the reign of Nero. Where tradition and internal evidence do not agree, internal evidence seems the more conclusive.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### An Innumerable Multitude Before the Throne (Verse 9)

"After these things." The things mentioned in this chapter and the three preceding chapters. Glorious scenes in heaven had been opened up to John's vision. The symbols and figures of speech which John used may have been plain enough to the seven churches of Asia. It seems that Christians were then being subjected to much persecution. Had he written in language which all could understand, it would have given the authorities an excuse to be much harder on the Christians. Jesus spoke some things in parables so that his enemies could not see the import of what he said. Ezekiel wrote at a time of great stress for the Jews; and though the Jews may have understood his symbols, the heathen could make nothing of them. And so with the latter part of Daniel's writing. And this leads to the conclusion that these writings were mostly for the encouragement of the people who lived at the time in which they were written. One thing is sure, namely, no man living today knows what some of these symbols mean. John saw "a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands." These were people who had been saved in various parts of the world. Their white robes were emblems of the purity of their character; and it must be that the palms represented their victory over sin and the devil. When Paul wrote to the Colossians, the gospel had been preached in all creation under heaven. (Col. 1: 23.)

## The Multitude Ascribe Salvation to God and the Lamb (Verse 10)

The plan of human redemption originated in the mind of God because of his love for his creatures. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3: 16.) "But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5: 8.) Jesus, called the Lamb of God, came to execute God's plan of human redemption. "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work." (John 4: 34.) "But the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." (John 5: 36.) "For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (John 6: 38.) In his prayer on the night of his betrayal, Jesus said, in his prayer to the Father, "I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do." And on the cross he said, "It is finished." As the Lamb of God, he was made an offering for the sins of the world.

## All the Angels Worshiped God (Verses 11, 12)

The angels in heaven are interested in the salvation of men. "I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no repentance." "Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." (Luke 15: 7, 10.) How much more joy then over an innumerable host of redeemed souls, who are in heaven, safe forevermore! In thanks and adoration for this wonderful redemption of this host, these angels in heaven fell before the throne on their faces, and worshiped God, saying, "Amen," etc. Amen, so be it. This was said in response to what the multitude had said; it was their signature, so to speak, to what the multitude had said. Then the angels spoke words of praise similar to what had been said about the Lamb, the Son of God. (Rev. 5: 12.) The Father and the Son receive the same honors. Blessing—praise and thanksgiving. Glory—to him is due honor and praise in worship from all his creatures. Wisdom—man should recognize God as absolutely wise in all his movements. He makes no mistakes; his means and agencies are perfectly adapted to the ends he purposes to accomplish. "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?" (Rom. 11: 33-35.) Thanksgivings are due Jehovah, for all good things come from him. "Offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving." (Psalm 50: 14.) "I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving." (Psalm 69: 30.) Honor—we can ascribe honor to Jehovah with words, but we really honor him by recognizing his authority over us in our obedience to his will. The selfish and disobedient do not honor God. "Honor Jehovah with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all

thine increase." (Prov. 3: 9.) "Them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." (1 Sam. 2: 30.) We cannot honor the Lord with lip service only. "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6: 46.) Power, as applied to God, frequently refers to moral power; this is now put forth in the gospel. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Might—this seems to refer to God's power over all things—his mighty power. All these characteristics, or attributes, belong to God forever and ever.

### Who the Multitude Were (Verses 13, 14)

In chapter 4, verse 4, we have this: "And round about the throne were four and twenty thrones: and upon the thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting, arrayed in white garments; and on their heads crowns of gold." One of these elders said to John, "These that are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and whence came they?" The elder, of course, asked this question with the intention of answering it; but the question would serve to rivet John's attention on the information he was about to give. John said, "My lord, thou knowest." That was equal to saying, "I do not know, but you can tell me." "These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." They had already been described as wearing white robes. Of course there was no actual physical contact with the blood of the Lamb; but by virtue of his shed blood they had been forgiven and cleansed from the guilt of sin; their sins had been blotted out, and a person forgiven is as free from sin at the moment as if he never had sinned. His character is spotless, and by continuing to avail himself of the gospel appointments, he remains so. His righteousness thus obtained is spoken of as a white robe. It is not that he is clothed with the personal righteousness of Christ; for the robes in which these multitudes were arrayed were made white by being washed in the blood of the Lamb. This could not be said of the personal righteousness of Christ, for certainly his righteousness was not attained by his own blood. Long before this, the prophet Isaiah said, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isa. 1: 18.) The multitude had come out of the great tribulation—the tribulation which evidently had not come when John saw this vision.

### Their Occupation and Security (Verse 15)

Perhaps you have wondered what people do in heaven. The redeemed are before God's throne, ready always to do his bidding; for in heaven they serve him day and night continually. In teaching his disciples how to pray, Jesus put in this petition: "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth." (Matt. 6: 10.) Heaven is not therefore a place of idleness, but of joyous service. It is impossible to imagine how people could be happy through an eternity of idleness. But obedience is a thing that must be learned. "Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered." (Heb. 5: 8.) The service of God in this life is the school in which we learn obedience; we must learn to serve here, or we will not have the joy

of service over there. "And he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them." They will be secure in his service, for they will have his constant care.

### **The Comforts of the Heavenly Home (Verses 16, 17)**

Many millions of people in this world never have sufficient food and clothing, nor any comfortable place in which to live. Many millions more have no more than the bare necessities of life. It seems that heaven would be especially attractive for these people. But into homes of plenty, or even of luxury, disappointments, troubles, and sorrows come. There can be no such thing as undisturbed happiness in this life. Hunger and thirst are tormenting sensations here, from which some are never entirely free; but the redeemed in heaven "shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more." The scorching rays of the sun will beat down no more on the toiler or weary pilgrim. No hunger, no thirst, no oppressive heat, shall invade that realm. Everything needful for happiness will be abundantly supplied; "for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life." He is the good shepherd of the sheep in this life, and shall continue so to be in the life that is to come. All the wants of the redeemed will be supplied, and nothing will be allowed to annoy or hurt them. There are unnumbered causes for tears here, but none in heaven. There God shall wipe all tears from their eyes, and there will be no more weeping. "And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God; and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away." (Rev. 21: 3, 4.)

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

One reason the gospel is God's power for saving men is, the glorious promises on the one hand, and the dire calamities on the other—blessings for the obedient and punishment for the disobedient. The goodness of God leads some people to repentance; but some disregard it, and treasure up for themselves "wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his works: to them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life: but unto them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Greek; but glory and honor and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek: for there is no respect of persons with God." (Rom. 2: 4-11.) These things await the people of this earth, and it now depends on us as to what our fate shall be; we have freedom of choice. What is your decision?

### **TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION**

Where the wisdom of God is made known.  
 Man's efforts to improve on God's wisdom.  
 The drawing power of great motives.  
 Comments on Rom. 2: 4-11.

## QUESTIONS

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

## Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
In John's first vision what did he see, and what was he told to do?  
After these things, what did he see?

## Verses 9, 10

What did John see?  
Give account of the development of the plan of salvation.

## Verses 11, 12

Show that angels have interest in the salvation of men.  
Discuss the terms the angels applied to God.

## Verses 13, 14

What is said in chapter 4, verse 4?  
What question did one of the elders ask John, and what did John reply?  
What did the elder say in reply?  
What were the white robes?  
Quote Isa. 1: 18.

## Verse 15

What is the occupation of the redeemed in heaven?  
What indicates their security?

## Verses 16, 17

Contrast the heavenly home with some homes here.  
Who is, and who will be, our shepherd?  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson XII—September 21, 1941

## OVERCOMING THE ADVERSARY

Rev. 12: 7-12; 15: 2-4

7 And there was war in heaven: Mi'châ-ël and his angels *going forth* to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels;

8 And they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven.

9 And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him.

10 And I heard a great voice in heaven, saying, Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night.

11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death.

12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that come off victorious from the beast, and from his image, and from the number of his name, standing by the sea of glass, having harps of God.

3 And they sing the song of Mō'sēs the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, thou King of the ages.

4 Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death.”* (Rev. 12: 11.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 27: 1-6.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

September 15. M..... The Accuser Cast Down (Rev. 12: 7-12)  
September 16. T..... The Song of the Lamb (Rev. 15: 2-4)  
September 17. W..... The Victory of Faith (1 John 5: 1-5)

|               |    |  |
|---------------|----|--|
| September 18. | T. | Victory in Poverty (Phil. 4: 10-13)    |
| September 19. | F. | Victory Over Self (Rom. 7: 22 to 8: 2) |
| September 20. | S. | Armed for Victory (Eph. 6: 10-16)      |
| September 21. | S. | Tempted But Victorious (Matt. 4: 1-11) |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Not certainly known. Some put the date as early as A.D. 67 or 68; others, as late as A.D. 96 or 97.

*Place.*—The isle of Patmos.

*Persons.*—John, Michael and his angels, the dragon and his angels, the woman that brought forth a man-child, those that kept the commandments of God.

*Lesson Links.*—An adversary is an antagonist, a foe, an opposer. By way of pre-eminence the devil is called the adversary. He is man's great adversary; he heads all the forces of evil. Hence, he is also called the enemy. (Matt. 13: 39; Luke 10: 19.) "To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3: 8.) Here, there is a great war—the greatest of all wars. It is not only a world war, but an all-time war. It will never end, till the last enemy is destroyed. "Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. 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: 24-26.) Death will be abolished when all are raised from the dead. In this all-time world war, Jesus the Christ is leading the forces of righteousness; and the devil, the great adversary, is leading the forces of evil. The ground of battle is the human heart; the prize is the human being. The will of man is the deciding factor; you will to follow Christ, or you will to follow the devil. Through Christ you may overcome the devil, or you may allow yourself to be overcome by the devil. In becoming a Christian, a person overcomes the devil; after this the devil seeks constantly to recapture what he has lost. "Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom withstand stedfast in your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world." (1 Pet. 5: 8, 9.) When the Pharisees said that Jesus cast out demons by Beelzebub, he showed the foolishness of their statement, adding this: "But no one can enter into the house of the strong man, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house." (Mark 3: 27.) Jesus was then spoiling Satan's goods for him; he had therefore so bound him that we can now overcome him. "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the evil one." (1 John 2: 14.) Satan can now hold no one in bondage, except by the consent of the one so held.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### A War Between Michael and the Dragon (Verses 7-9)

When John saw a door opened in heaven, he heard one saying to him, "Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must come to pass hereafter." (Rev. 4: 1.) The things which passed before John's vision, as if occurring before his eyes in heaven, were, for the most part, things that were to occur on earth. The language

does not mean that everything John mentioned was then future, for the background of some of the things mentioned might be brought into view. In mentioning our future plans, we sometimes find it necessary to mention some occurrences or events that led up to the formation of the plans. The twelfth chapter opens up with a scene that must have had its fulfillment here on earth. It seems that the most of the commentators think the woman represents the church, and that the great red dragon was the Roman government, or paganism as centered in the Roman government. Concerning the visions now about to be introduced, Adam Clark has this to say: "I now come to a part of this book that is deemed of the greatest importance by the Protestant Church, but is peculiarly difficult and obscure. I have often acknowledged my own incapacity to illustrate these prophecies. I might have availed myself of the labors of others, but I know not who is right; or whether any of the writers on this book have hit the sense is more than I can assert, and more than I think." And so he inserts the comments of another on chapters 12, 13, and 17. In Dan. 10: 13 Michael is called "one of the chief princes"; in verse 21, "Michael your prince." In Dan. 12: 1 he is called "the great prince who standeth for the children of thy people." In Jude 9 we have this bit of information: "But Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing judgment, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." The other reference to him is in our lesson. It may be that Rome, as an active agent of the devil, might be called the dragon, but in Rev. 20: 2 the dragon is called "the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan." Some one has said, "Upon this passage (verses 7 and 8) was built up the legend of the revolt of the angels in heaven, under the lead of Satan himself, till then an archangel, and their expulsion and confinement in 'Tartarus.' The clearly mythical character of which is, of course, entirely obvious." Yet this war is represented as taking place after John saw the vision; and it cannot be that there was no Satan till after John was on the isle of Patmos! "And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him." His extensive power was taken from him.

### A Shout of Joy in Heaven (Verses 10-12)

If the war just mentioned was a war between Christianity and paganism, as some contend, it resulted in the complete overthrow of paganism. We can be sure that it was a war between the forces of righteousness and the forces of evil, and that righteousness was victorious. All heaven, as with one voice, rejoiced because of the victory of righteousness over evil. "Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ." This cannot mean that the salvation of God, his power, his kingdom, and the authority of Christ, had just then begun to be actual realities; but that they had then come into full display, that they were now realized as never before. As the word of God, the gospel of Christ, is the Christian's weapon of warfare, it seems that the power mentioned here is the gospel, the word of God. It had been God's power for breaking down rebellion and overcoming sinners ever since it was announced by the apostles of Christ. From

the connection and the reason immediately assigned it seems that the salvation, power, kingdom, and the authority of Christ had now come to be manifested in a wonderful way: "For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night." The devil brings false accusations against the brethren, slanders them; for he is a liar, the father of all lies and liars. It was not a war in which physical force is used. "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony." No carnal weapons were used—the blood of the Lamb, the word of God, and the courage of the forces of righteousness, decided the outcome of that war. "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.) The object of the warfare was, and is, to destroy everything that is against the knowledge of God, which is the gospel of Christ, and to bring every thought of man into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Preaching to the people that Christ died for them, and giving their testimony concerning his life, death, and resurrection, had great power in overcoming the opposition to the Lamb of God. The death of Christ on the cross for the sins of man subdued the rebellion of many, by convincing them of his divine mission. "Jesus therefore said, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things." (John 8: 28.) To lift Jesus up was to crucify him. "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.) By his death on the cross he would conquer. But his death had to be preached, and testimony concerning his being the Son of God and the Savior of the world, had to be given. Along these lines and by these means the forces of righteousness do their fighting. And regardless of the fact that many lost their lives in their defense of the right, they did not love this present life enough to cause them to renounce their faith. This very fact had a powerful influence over the heathen. "Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that dwell in them." There is great cause for rejoicing when the devil has been defeated. The devil's defeat increased his wrath. It has always been so. Wherever the fight against the devil becomes intense, he is bound to lose ground. It is then that his rage flares up; he then stirs his servants to action against the cause of truth and right. If you think you are living the Christian life without stirring up anybody against you, you are not living it very intensely. If a man preaches without stirring up opposition, he is not interfering much with the devil's plans; for when he sees that any of his plans are likely soon to be defeated, his wrath increases. You cannot fight the devil and keep him in a good humor. Nor is the devil particular in his choice of weapons, but uses whatever weapons conditions and circumstances allow him to use. Where and when the state of civilization permitted it, Christians were put to death by the most cruel and inhuman tortures that human ingenuity could devise. It would be fine, if civilization could advance far enough that the devil could not make any headway against the truth by misrepresentation.

### Another Wonderful Scene (Rev. 15: 2)

We cannot comprehend a sea of glass mingled with fire, but it would be a wonderful sight to behold. The beast referred to is more fully set forth in chapter thirteen. The beast was evidently the civil government, which for a time overcame the saints. People who would not worship the image of the beast were killed; many other unreasonable things were done. But such monsters cannot last. In this scene John also saw "them that come off victorious from the beast, and from his image, and from the number of his name, standing by the sea of glass, having harps of God." What John saw in heaven is not set forth as a pattern for the public worship of the church. We could not arrange for people to stand by a sea of glass mingled with fire, while playing their harps!

### Songs of Praise (Verses 3, 4)

The song of Moses must have been the song of deliverance which the children of Israel sang after they were delivered from Egyptian bondage. (Ex. 15: 1-18.) This was a song of praise—"Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, thou King of the ages." The average congregation of worshipers these days do not sing as many songs of praise as they should; many songs lack dignity and power. Too often they express feelings for the Lord such as people feel for one another. And there is too much I and too much we in the songs of today, and too often they express feelings that are more amorous than reverent. Notice the wording of this song. If people could fully realize that the ways of Jehovah are righteous and true, they would be more anxious to walk in them. "Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name?" This is what all should do, for God is the only one that is absolutely holy. Sometimes what should be, or what is intended to be, is stated as if it were an actual fact. All nations should come and worship before God. His righteous acts are manifested to all; no one can accuse him of mistakes or wrongdoing. And he has made plain the way of life, and invites all men to walk in it.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

The Christian should acquaint himself with prophecy; but he should carefully refrain from mapping out any program for the fulfillment of prophecy. The example of the Jews should warn him against so doing. They had studied the prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah, and had mapped out in their own minds what would occur when he did come; but, because things did not turn out according to their program, they rejected and crucified the Messiah. Too many professed Christians are now imitating the Jews in making out a program for his second coming. Will they be like the Jews, if things do not work out according to their program?

A passage of scripture cannot be made to teach whatever suits our fancy. When Jesus spoke of being lifted up, he referred to his being lifted up upon the cross; and it is a grievous sin to so pervert his language as has been done in sermon and song. Both in sermon and song people have been exhorted to "lift him up"—to lift him up in teaching, in singing, in our way of living, and so on. And thus a striking passage of scripture is sinfully perverted. Those who do so have no right to criticize any one for perverting a passage of scripture.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The danger of speculating on the symbols and prophecies of Revelation.

The Christian's warfare and his weapons.

## QUESTIONS

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

## Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
Why is the term adversary applied to the devil?  
For what purpose does Peter say the Son of God was manifested? Show when this war between the devil and Christ will end.  
What is the war about, and what is the deciding factor?  
What did Jesus say about spoiling the strong man's goods?  
Quote 1 John 2: 14.

## Verses 7-9

Who was Michael?  
What is said of this war, and the result of it?

## Verses 10-12

Where was rejoicing over the victory, and what was said?  
Who is the accuser?  
Discuss the nature of that war, and the war of Christians in general.  
What is the object of the Christian's war against evil?  
What did Jesus say about the Son of man being lifted up?  
What effect does defeat have on the devil?

## Rev. 15: 2

Discuss this verse.

## Verses 3, 4

Discuss this song of praise.  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson XIII—September 28, 1941

## THE FULFILLMENT OF HISTORY: THE NEW JERUSALEM

Rev. 21: 1-7, 10-12, 22-24

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more.

2 And I saw the holy city, new Jê-ru'sâ-lêm, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God:

4 And he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away.

5 And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said: Write: for these words are faithful and true.

6 And he said unto me, They are come to pass. I am the Al'phâ and the O-mê'gâ, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city Jê-ru'sâ-lêm, coming down out of heaven from God.

11 Having the glory of God: her light was like unto a stone most precious, as it were a jasper stone, clear as crystal:

12 Having a wall great and high; having twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Is'râ-êl:

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof.

23 And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb.

24 And the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof; and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.” (Rev. 21: 7.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 11: 1-9.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|               |    |  |
|---------------|----|--|
| September 22. | M. | Things to Come (Rev. 21: 1-7)          |
| September 23. | T. | The Prophet's Vision (Isa. 2: 1-4)     |
| September 24. | W. | The New Jerusalem (Rev. 21: 9-21)      |
| September 25. | T. | Life in the Holy City (Rev. 21: 1-8)   |
| September 26. | F. | The Light of the City (Rev. 21: 22-29) |
| September 27. | S. | The River of Life (Rev. 22: 1-5)       |
| September 28. | S. | The Judgment (Matt. 25: 31-46)         |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Date not certain. Some put it as early as A.D. 67 or 68; others, as late as A.D. 96 or 97.

*Place.*—The isle of Patmos.

*Persons.*—John and an angel.

*Lesson Links.*—It seems that our lesson speaks of conditions that will be ushered in after the present order of things passes away. In Rev. 20: 11-15 we are told of the judgment. “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne.” Of course, the dead here mentioned were the dead now made alive—those who had been raised from the dead. It is the scene set forth in Matt. 25: 31-46. “But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all the nations.” The great Judge, “who will render to every man according to his works,” sits on the throne of judgment. All people will be there. “For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” (2 Cor. 5: 10.) “And books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life.” A distinction is made between “the books” and “another book.” The people “were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works.” A judgment presupposes law. Two things are taken into account, the law and the conduct of the people who are before the court. In this judgment people will not all be judged by the same law—not judged out of the same book. Each will be judged by the law that was in force while he lived; it could not be otherwise. People living now will not be judged out of the book of the law of Moses nor of the patriarchs; neither will the people living under those laws be judged by the gospel of Christ. Hence in the judgment books are opened, not one book, but books; and the people will be judged out of the book of the law under which they lived. “Another book”—the book of life—was opened. It was different from the others. It is a book in which the names of the righteous, God's servants, are written; a book, also, from which these names may be blotted out. “Let them be blotted out of the book of life, and not be written with the righteous.” (Psalm 69: 28.) “Yea, I beseech thee also, true yokefellow, help these women, for they labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of

my fellow-workers, whose names are in the book of life." (Phil. 4: 3.) And yet names may be blotted out of that book. (Rev. 3: 5; Ex. 32: 32.) If the name is blotted out, it will not be in the book of life at the judgment. "And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire."

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### New Heaven and New Earth (Verse 1)

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away." On this point Peter speaks as follows: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Pet. 3: 10-13.) No one can now speak with authority as to what this new heaven and new earth will be, excepting that it is to be the abode of the glorified servants of God. Peter tells us that it is a place wherein dwelleth righteousness.

### The New Jerusalem (Verses 2-4)

There was an old Jerusalem; it was the capital city of the Jews. That Jerusalem will pass away when the earth and the works therein shall be burned up. Paul speaks of another Jerusalem. "But the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is our mother." (Gal. 4: 27.) That is, this Jerusalem that is above is our mother city, our capital city. In a like sense the old Jerusalem was the mother city of the Jews, for they are said to have been its children. (Gal. 4: 26.) John saw this new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, "made ready as a bride adorned for her husband." A bride is a woman newly married, or about to be married. This bride was married, for she had a husband. When did this marriage to Christ occur? In speaking of this marriage relationship Paul says, "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." After John saw the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, he heard a great voice announce the glories and blessings which were to be the portion of the redeemed. God would be with them, dwelling in his tabernacle. His presence would be a surety that the home would be all that human hearts could desire. The dwellers in that home will be God's people, and he will therefore see to it that nothing will be lacking. Here there is much weeping; but over there God shall wipe all tears from our eyes, and there shall be no more cause for weeping. This should make heaven especially attractive to those who have little else than sorrows and heartaches in this life. "And death shall be no more." This shows plainly that the matters spoken of here come after all have been raised from the dead; for death will hold sway as long

as there are some who are still not raised out of death. Paul tells us that the last enemy to be destroyed is death, and that will occur when all people are raised to die no more. The thought of death will disturb no one, nor will there be any mourning over the death of those we love. "Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more." That condition will be so unlike anything with which we are acquainted that our imagination cannot grasp it! "The first things are passed away." The whole scheme of things as we now know them will have passed away. Nothing here is permanent, nothing is fully satisfying; there is no such thing here as unalloyed bliss.

### "I Make All Things New" (Verses 5-7)

It will not be a renovation of old things—"behold, I make all things new." And this also passes our understanding; yet we know that he who created the present universe can destroy it, and make all things new. "Write: for these words are faithful and true." What God said was as true as if it had already come to pass, for he would be faithful in carrying out his promises. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise." "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end." Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and Omega the last. It is the words of the great voice which John heard speaking. In chapter one, verse 8, we have these words: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." (Psalm 90: 2.) "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." Some one has said, "In our present state we may drink of the stream, then we shall drink at the fountain." We are invited to drink of the water of life even now. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." (Isa. 55: 1.) "Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." (John 7: 37.) When a person is real thirsty, there is nothing so satisfying and refreshing as a drink of cool pure water. In a further description of this New Jerusalem, John says, "And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb," and this river was in the midst of the street of that city. (Rev. 22: 1, 2.) There is then the greatest abundance of the water of life. "He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Because he is a son, he is an heir. "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him." (Rom. 8: 16, 17.) We must therefore overcome, and must also suffer with Christ, in order that we may inherit these things. There is a fight to be made, and a victory to be won, before we inherit the eternal riches. And here again our own determination decides the issue. "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.) We must so over-

come our own appetites and passions as not to allow them to lead us into sin. We must overcome false teaching. "For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." (Tit. 1: 10, 11.) That is given as the reason for saying that elders must be able to convict the gainsayers. There is as much need of this now as then. There is danger that a righteous person be again overcome by sin. (2 Pet. 2: 20, 21.)

### A Further View of the New Jerusalem (Verses 10-12)

Verse ten seems to be, in part, a repetition of what is said in verse two. From a high mountain John could see down into the streets of the city. It was filled with the glory of God. The city's light was like a stone most precious, "as it were a jasper stone." "Among precious stones there are some even of the same species more valuable than others; for their value is in proportion to their being free from flaws, and of good water, that is, a uniform and brilliant transparency. A 'crystal' is perfectly clear; the oriental 'jasper' is a beautiful sea green. The stone that is here described is represented as a perfectly transparent 'jasper,' being as unclouded as the brightest crystal, and consequently the most precious of its species. Nothing can be finer than this description; the light of the city is ever intense, equal, and splendid; but it is tinged with the green hue, in order to make it agreeable to the sight."—*Clark*. The walls of the city are further described in verses 16-21.

### The Source of the City's Light (Verses 22-24)

In olden times the temple was the center of worship, the place where the people brought their offerings. In the New Jerusalem there is no temple: "for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof." And because of their presence, "the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it." All in that city will walk in the light shining out from these glorious beings. "There shall be no night" there—no darkness anywhere in that glorious abode. John's description of heaven is mostly by way of contrast. He gives us some idea of the bliss of that home by showing us what will not be there. It will be wonderful to be where there is no sickness, no pain, no darkness, no sorrow, no heartaches, no death.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

No matter what view we take of any portion of this book of Revelation we meet with difficulties. And this is true of the last two chapters, as well as others. One writer makes this suggestion concerning these two chapters: "If the field of the vision may be understood to be the church, in its later prosperity and universal increase, then all is plain." But is it? In these comments it has been assumed that reference is made to heaven, a description of its glories; but can one be sure of that? If the wicked have all been consigned to their doom and the righteous are forever safe inside the walls of that city, why the gates in the walls? And yet, if John was referring to the church, unless he was dealing in highly wrought figurative language, some of his expressions cannot be made to apply to the church.

Here is Clark's closing note on Revelation: "Having now brought my short notes on this very obscure book to a conclusion, it may be expected that though I do not adopt any of the theories which have been delivered concerning it, yet I should give the most plausible scheme of the ancients or moderns which has come to my knowledge. This I would gladly do if I had any scheme to which I could give a decided preference, which I have not. Though I give the date of the book in A.D. 95 or 96, I do so not following my own opinion, but on the authority of others. I think from internal evidence it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem."

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The books and the book of life.

Life in heaven contrasted with life on the earth.

What must one do to enter heaven?

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Discuss Rev. 20: 11-15.

#### Verse 1

Discuss verse 1 in connection with 2 Pet. 3: 10-13.

#### Verses 2-4

What is said of a Jerusalem in Gal. 4: 27?

In what sense is the Jerusalem above our mother?

Discuss the church as a bride.

Discuss other things said in these verses.

#### Verses 5-7

Discuss verse 5.

What is meant by saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega"?

What promises are made to the thirsty?

Discuss verse 7.

#### Verses 10-12

Discuss these verses.

#### Verses 22-24

What purpose did the old temple serve?

Why no temple in heaven?

How is the bliss of heaven most easily conveyed to our understanding?

Discuss the reflections.



## FOURTH QUARTER

## SOME GREAT CHRISTIAN TEACHINGS

AIM: To familiarize the pupil with great Christian teachings with a view to building up Christian faith and life.

## Lesson I—October 5, 1941

## GOD OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

Gen. 1: 26-28; Matt. 6: 24-33

26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27 And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them; and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

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

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

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

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

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

29 Yet I say unto you, that even Söl'ö-mön in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

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

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

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

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.” (Matt. 6: 9.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 103: 8-14.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|               |    |  |
|---------------|----|--|
| September 29. | M. | God Our Creator (Gen. 1: 26-28)            |
| September 30. | T. | God Merciful and Gracious (Ex. 34: 4-7)    |
| October 1.    | W. | A Dispenser of Benefits (Psalm 103: 1-8)   |
| October 2.    | T. | A Source of Strength (Isa. 40: 27-31)      |
| October 3.    | F. | God's Fatherly Care (Matt. 6: 25-34)       |
| October 4.    | S. | Our Father to Be Worshiped (John 4: 19-26) |
| October 5.    | S. | “Our Father” in Prayer (Matt. 6: 5-15)     |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—According to Usher, 4004 B.C.; according to Calmet, 4000 B.C.; according to William Hales, who is described as “far superior in Biblical learning and elaboration to either of the preceding,” 5411 B.C. But it is impossible to determine the date of the six days of creation; and the creation of the heavens and the earth goes back beyond the six days of creation, how far no one knows. Date of the Sermon on the Mount: Probably A.D. 29.

*Places.*—Man was probably created and given a home in the lower reaches of the Euphrates valley, which may have then been where the Persian Gulf now is. For Matt. 6: 24-33, a mountain in Galilee.

*Persons.*—The Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—and the first human beings, Adam and Eve; Jesus, the disciples, and the multitudes. Such passages as John 1: 1-3, 10; Col. 1: 16, 17; Heb. 1: 1, 2, show clearly that in all the work of creation the Father designed, or planned, and that the Son executed the plans. The following passages show that the Holy Spirit also had a part in the creation: Gen. 1: 2; Job 26: 13; Psalm 104: 30. He brought order out of chaos, and made things usable.

*Lesson Links.*—Think of the high-sounding words and phrases a modern writer—for that matter, all the uninspired writers of the past—uses in describing a great event, and then compare these writings with the first chapter of Genesis. The simplicity and directness of the style in the Genesis account of the creation of all things stamp it as not the product of uninspired man. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” What wonders are told in these ten words!

Much of the crime today is due to the fact that everywhere God is being eliminated in theory from his own creation. If men do not believe Gen. 1: 1 they cannot believe there is anything sacred about human life. If a man believes that all life originated by spontaneous generation, and that man developed to his present stage by a long process of evolution, he cannot believe there is anything more sacred about man than there is in the lower forms of life through which they suppose he came. When a person arrives at that point, he is ready to commit any crime against his fellow man that he thinks he can “get away with.” Such a man has no foundation whatsoever for any moral principles. If he lives a decent life, he does so in spite of his faith; for it certainly does not help him.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

## The Creation of Man (Verses 26-28)

There was order and there was system in creation. Before man was created everything necessary to his well-being was created, and made ready for his use. In fact, everything was created in a natural order; each day's creation prepared for the thing to be created next. Vegetable life must have light; hence light came before plants and trees were created. And as animal life depends on vegetable life, vegetation was created before the animals were made. And as man is dependent on all other things, he was created last. It is singular, yet true, that man is at once the most dependent and the most independent of all of God's creation. He is dependent on all the lower creation, and yet is master of it all. “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” Here the *us* and the *our*

show plurality of persons. The Father, the Son (whom John calls the Word), and the Holy Spirit all had a part in the creation of man.

*The Nature of Man.*—In the first chapter of Genesis we have the general account of the creation of all things. In the second chapter Moses begins the history of God's dealings with man. This made it necessary to go back to man's creation, and here we have more of the details of man's creation. This bare fact is stated in the first chapter: "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." In the second chapter we are told that God made man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Also in the second chapter we have the particulars of the woman's creation; but in the first chapter Moses merely tells us that God made a male and a female. So far as we know, the body of man is not different from the body of animals as to material, but only as to form. The bodies of man and animal both return to the dust whence they came. And yet there is a vast difference between man and animals. And there is a difference in the phraseology used by Moses in describing their creation. Paul gives emphasis to the truth that there is more to a man than a body. "Though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day." (2 Cor. 4: 16.) It is said that man was made in the image of God; it is not so said of animals. The image and likeness of God was not stamped upon animals; of all of God's earthly creatures man alone bears that image. It does not seem possible that this can refer to man's physical form, for we cannot understand how a physical being and a spirit can be alike in form, and certainly they are not alike in substance. "God is a Spirit." "A spirit hath not flesh and bones." Yet in some way there is a likeness; in some way man was made in the image of God. God has intelligence, emotions, and will; he knows, loves and hates, and wills. Man also has intelligence, emotions, and will; he has the power to know, to love and hate, and to will. In these matters, though in a limited way, man is like God. Also when man was first made, he was pure and upright in character; in this respect also he was like God. He is also capable of exercising dominion, or rule; in this he is also, in a limited way, like God. He was created to "have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

In many ways man has made poor use of his God-given nature and dominion. He has corrupted his spirit, degraded his body, and often been very wasteful and cruel in his powers of dominion. He has slaughtered to extinction some of the things over which God gave him dominion. In respect to wild life civilized men have been far less wise than the savages.

"Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it." So God commanded; yet the determination of many married people not to be parents makes their marriage little, if any, less than legalized adultery. Man has done much in a material way to subdue the earth; the material has engaged his attention to the neglect of the spiritual. He has created and set in motion many physical forces that he has not the moral strength and spiritual wisdom to properly use. Billions of dollars are being spent, and men of highest skill are being employed, by the nations, each nation trying to outstrip the other in putting into operation forces that will kill and maim the most people. What a perversion of man's God-given powers!

**"Ye Cannot Serve God and Mammon" (Matt. 6: 24)**

This does not mean that a man cannot serve two masters who are working to the same end. Both God and Christ are our Masters and we serve them. They work together to accomplish the same ends. In cases like that we are really serving one master. But we cannot serve two masters whose purposes are different, and who therefore require different kinds of activities, so that when we work for the one we are working against the other. In such an attempt we will become more and more devoted to one master, and less and less interested in the other. Many people start out with the idea that they can have their heart set on serving God and on gaining riches also; they cannot keep that up—it is too much like trying to go in opposite directions at the same time. Take warning—"Ye cannot serve God and mammon." In the verses of this lesson Jesus is teaching by contrast, as we can easily see when we reach verse 33. He is speaking against the less important, that he may emphasize the most important. It will help, if we keep that in mind.

**Be Not Anxious Concerning Worldly Things (Verse 25)**

The *therefore* shows that what Jesus is about to say grows out of what he had just said. To be overly anxious about food, drink, and clothing is to serve mammon. Your life is important, and so is your body, else God would not have given us either. We must not needlessly endanger our lives, nor heedlessly neglect the health of our bodies; but we must not become so devoted to their care that we will refuse the call for service where there is danger. But this verse really cautions us against putting in too much thought about our food, drink, and clothing. These are essential to life, health, and comfort; some do not have enough, but some have much more than they need, or is good for them. And the majority of folks are thinking of little else—always thinking up plans to satisfy the flesh. It is an animal life. The spiritual needs are neglected, or even ignored; and sometimes they are made sport of. Let us be not like animals, nor even like the heathen.

**A Lesson from the Birds (Verses 26, 27)**

Let us not overlook one important fact about the birds and other animal life. They live the life that God appointed them. They do not rebel against their God-appointed mode of living, but are joyous in it. They do not sow, but they are generally busy gathering their food. In some kinds of weather they have a hard time gathering sufficient food, and sometimes fail to do so; but they live as God appointed them to live, and he feeds them. We are of more value than birds; and if we will live the life God has appointed for us to live, as they do, we will have food and clothing. But how far we depart from the life God appointed for us to live! Live as we should, and trust God for results; that includes work.

"And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life?" For, "measure of his life," the marginal reading has, "Or, his stature"; and so also has the Common Version. Either translation is therefore allowable. It makes no difference which is the correct rendering, for anxiety can add nothing either to one's stature or to the years of one's life. Much of it will shorten one's life. Why, then, so much anxiety?

### A Lesson from the Lilies (Verses 28-30)

The lilies, like the birds and animals, live their God-appointed life. If that one idea would sink into our hearts, it would be worth much to us. Lilies do not depart from the life God appointed them. Of all of God's creation man is the only thing that transgresses the laws of God. We cannot even imagine what a glorious world this would be if every human being lived as perfectly in harmony with God's laws as do the lilies. Each life would be as beautiful as the lily. "They toil not, neither do they spin;" but they live as God would have them live. A lily is a beautiful thing—even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of them. Yet today they live, and bloom; and tomorrow they die, and are then cast into the oven. It seems that the word *grass* refers to any herbage of the field, even including the lily. In that country dry weeds, grass, and stubble, were used to heat the ovens for baking purposes. And so the beautiful lily soon became as stubble. If men live the life that God appointed them, as do the lilies, and trust him as children trust their father, there would be no occasion for Jesus to say to them, "O ye of little faith." But alas! men trust more in themselves and their own efforts than they do in God and his fatherly care.

### Seek First the Kingdom of God (Verses 31-33)

Anxiety does not bring food, drink, or clothing; why then be anxious? God knows our needs, which shall be supplied to us in God's own appointed way. And one of the essential elements in God's plan for us is, that we engage in honest labor. If we will not work, we have no grounds for expecting any of the things we need. But to put in our thought and strength in seeking material things is to put ourselves on a level with the heathen, or even the animals. "But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Here the most important thing is stated—seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness. God's kingdom is his rule and authority over us; his righteousness is that which we attain through the forgiveness of our sins.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

An ape has no morals; an evolutionist has no grounds for any. God created us; we are his. He has a right to our very best service. He gave us our bodies, and we have no right to abuse and degrade them. Every act of service we render to God, every command we obey, is done through the instrumentality of the body. We should therefore not let sin reign in our bodies, but keep them clean and pure. Do not therefore discredit the importance of the body; it is the instrument of service. Keep the body fit for the Master's use.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The nature of man.

The extent of man's dominion.

How man has abused his dominion.

God's dominion over man.

Seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

## QUESTIONS

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

## Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons. What to you is the most striking thing in the Genesis record of creation? How does recognition of God as Creator promote morality?

## Verses 26-28

Give the order of creation—show that things came in natural order. Who were engaged in creation? Discuss the nature of man—show that he consists of more than body. In what sense is man in the image of God? What charge did God give man? Discuss his failure to use his dominion wisely and righteously.

## Matt. 6: 24

Why cannot a man serve two masters? What is meant by "mammon"?

## Verse 25

Why should we not entirely neglect, or abuse, our bodies?

What is more important than food and drink? In the eyes of the world, what are the most important things?

## Verses 26, 27

What is an important fact about the life of birds and animals? What is the lesson Jesus teaches in this reference to birds? What life did God appoint for us to live? Why not be anxious?

## Verses 28-30

What does Jesus say about the lilies? What is the lesson to us? What was the method of baking in Palestine? How may we escape being charged of having little faith? In what do most men put the greatest confidence?

## Verses 31-33

Discuss verses 31, 32. Repeat verse 33. Discuss its meaning. Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson II—October 12, 1941

## CHRIST OUR SAVIOR

Matt 20: 25-28; Luke 19: 1-10

25 But Jē'sūs called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the rulers of the Gēn'tiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

26 Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister;

27 And whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant:

28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

1 And he entered and was passing through Jēr'i-chō.

2 And behold, a man called by name Zāc-chæ'ūs; and he was a chief publican, and he was rich.

3 And he sought to see Jē'sūs who he was; and could not for the crowd, because he was little of stature.

4 And he ran on before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

5 And when Jē'sūs came to the place, he looked up, and said unto him, Zāc-chæ'ūs, 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 Zāc-chæ'ūs 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 Jē'sūs 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.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3: 16.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Isa. 53: 1-6.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS.**—

|             |    |   |
|-------------|----|---|
| October 6.  | M. | A Friend of Sinners (Luke 19: 1-10)       |
| October 7.  | T. | A Ministering Servant (Matt. 20: 20-28)   |
| October 8.  | W. | God's Justifying Grace (Rom. 3: 19-26)    |
| October 9.  | T. | The Love of God in Christ (Rom. 8: 31-39) |
| October 10. | F. | Christ Died for All (2 Cor. 5: 11-19)     |
| October 11. | S. | The Exalted Savior (Phil. 2: 5-11)        |
| October 12. | S. | Abounding Grace (1 Tim. 1: 12-17)         |

## LESSON SETTINGS

**Time.**—Probably A.D. 31. Jesus was on his last journey to Jerusalem.

**Places.**—Apparently the conversation recorded in Matt. 20: 25-28 occurred in Perea. The occurrences of Luke 19: 1-10 occurred at Jericho.

**Persons.**—Jesus, his disciples, Zaccheus, and some critics of Jesus.

**Lesson Links.**—"Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Tim. 1: 15.) "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." (John 12: 47.) Read also the Golden Text. Jesus did not come to condemn the world; he came to save it. No one has been lost or will be lost because Jesus came into the world; without him the whole world would have been lost. Jesus died that men might live. If we had a correct understanding of the mission of Jesus into the world, we would never raise the question as to what will become of the heathen who never hear of Christ. If he had not come into the world, the world would never have heard of him. We might as well ask what would have become of the world if no one had ever heard of him.

People who never hear of Jesus cannot believe on him. "Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8: 24.) "How shall they believe in him whom they have not heard?" (Rom. 10: 14.) It was necessary therefore that the gospel be preached, that men might believe and might know what to do to be saved. Here then the gospel plays an essential part. Men never would have known anything about the meaning and purpose of the mission and death of Christ had not these matters been set forth clearly through the gospel. It is therefore the means of leading men to Christ, who alone can save from sin. And because it has power to draw men to Christ, it is the power of God unto salvation. The gospel is preached that men may be saved, and not to cause people to be lost. They were lost if there never had been a gospel. No one is lost because the gospel is preached to him; he was lost already. The gospel presents to lost sinners a way of escape. To refuse and reject the gospel is to trample under foot the blood of Christ and to despise the grace of God; this, of course, intensifies one's guilt and shows one to be guilty of deliberate spiritual suicide.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

## "The Son of Man Came . . . to Give" (Verses 25-28)

By comparing Matt. 20: 20, 21, with Mark 10: 35-37 the occasion for what is said in this part of our lesson will be seen. James and John were ambitious. Through their mother they asked for the highest places in the kingdom which they supposed Jesus would soon set up in Jerusalem. When the other disciples knew of this move, they were indignant. The ten felt that James and John had been trying to take an unfair advantage of them. They were active candidates for high places; they were candidates against the ten, and the ten had not entered the race! To be a candidate against a brother for any place of advantage, better pay, or higher honors, does not fit in with the Christian spirit.

There were such places of honor in a worldly kingdom; the disciples had just such places in mind. They needed some plain teaching on that point. So Jesus called about him the twelve, and said to them, "Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you." This would call their minds to the Roman government, for they were acquainted with its operations. That government had its king, its underrulers, its citizenry, and subject nations and peoples. That was the only kind of a kingdom the disciples knew anything about, and some today think the kingdom of Christ will be yet built on that pattern. But the words of Jesus should set that idea aside—"Not so shall it be among you." The kingdom of Christ was not to be anything like that. And while there is so much agitation about the kingdom, the foregoing is a thought worth considering. In the kingdom of God there were to be none who lord it over others.

"Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister." In those days a minister was a waiter, a servant. Religious people have drifted away from the original meaning of that term by acquiring the habit of thinking of a minister as a preacher. A preacher should be a minister, a servant; but too often he is a ruler—too often he is the chief executive of all the affairs of the church. He outlines the plans for all of the church's activities, and then calls on the members to carry out his plans. In this way the members become his ministers, his servants. But all the children of God, including the preacher, should be ministers. "And whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant," your bond servant. "First" here does not refer to time, but to rank or importance. The most important person, the "first" in any community, is the one who renders the best service. It does not require much thinking to see the truth of this. The washerwoman or the scrubwoman or the garbage man or any mechanic or laborer is worth more to the community than the society butterfly or "the gentleman of leisure" who lives off the income from money gained by his parents. This is so manifestly true that it seems that anyone who does no useful work would feel utterly worthless. How different is God's standard of greatness from man's standard! And yet, in all the affairs of men, service is the important thing. And service can be rendered in so many ways, that no one need complain that there is nothing in the church for him to do. There are sick people that need attention, poor people that need food and clothing, and ignorant people that

need teaching. Do not wait for somebody to tell you what to do; the Lord has already commanded you—be his minister, not man's. Through love, be servants one to another. In such cases you are the needy person's minister. "Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another: for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." (1 Pet. 5: 5.) The person who is too proud to do any needed service, however lowly that service may be, is too proud to be a Christian, too proud to be a minister of our Lord. "Even so ye also, when ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do." (Luke 17: 10.) Nothing we do brings any profit to the Lord—the profit all comes to us.

Jesus came to minister to the needs of others. Never before or since was so much service crowded into such a short time as was crowded into the few brief years of the public ministry of Jesus. These services accomplished at least three things: (1) They relieved much suffering; (2) in them Jesus set us an example of service; (3) they proved him to be what he claimed to be—Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, a proper ransom for man. A ransom is a price paid for redemption. And because Jesus himself paid the ransom price for man's redemption from the slavery to sin, he is both the ransom and the redeemer.

### Jesus at Jericho (Luke 19: 1, 2)

Jericho was a very ancient city. It is first mentioned in Num. 22: 1. It was a city of considerable importance, with a great wall around it. It was about five miles west of the Jordan, directly opposite to the point where the children of Israel crossed as they entered the promised land. Travelers from Galilee to Jerusalem usually crossed the Jordan below the Sea of Galilee, went down through Perea, and recrossed the Jordan at the ford east of Jericho. This was the way Jesus had come on this journey to Jerusalem. On this visit to Jericho Jesus opened the eyes of two blind men. (Matt. 20: 29-34.) Apparently one of these did the talking for both; hence Luke and Mark mention only one.

"And behold, a man called by name Zacchaeus; and he was a chief publican, and he was rich." The publicans were the Roman tax collectors. The Romans had a peculiar method of collecting taxes. Men of wealth and prominence bought the tax rights in districts, and then appointed collectors. The plan gave great room for extortion. Publicans were therefore unpopular everywhere. The Jews had additional reasons for hating the publicans. Many of them felt that it was wrong to pay taxes to a heathen government. When one of their own number became a publican, they felt that he was a traitor to God and the nation.

### Jesus Lodges with Zacchaeus (Verses 3-6)

Of necessity the people farthest from Jerusalem started to the feasts first. As they traveled, others along the route would join their company. We can imagine that the crowd had grown large by the time they reached Jericho. The throngs would account for the fact that Zacchaeus, who was short of stature, had to devise his novel scheme to see Jesus. He sought to see him, but could not. So, like a boy, he ran ahead, and climbed a tree, so that he could see over

the heads of the crowd. One wonders what would have been the fate of Zaccheus, if he had been taller than any of the crowd! Perhaps he thought no one would see him in that tree. But it was commendable in Zaccheus, that he was so anxious to see Jesus; a rich man doing an undignified thing to see a man who was the poorest of the poor! And the results show that it was not out of mere curiosity that he wanted to see Jesus. He came down out of that tree in a hurry when Jesus said to him, "Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." Zaccheus received him into his home joyfully. He felt that he was especially honored in that Jesus had without solicitation selected him for a host. How would he have felt, had he known fully who Jesus was?

### The Jews Murmured (Verse 7)

According to their standards, which they had mostly made themselves, the Jews were very strict in their synagogue discipline. If a man did not come up to their standards they turned him out; he was then a sinner. He was an outcast both religiously and socially. A publican was denied membership; he was therefore an outcast. When Jesus ate with these outcasts and publicans, the strict Jew's feelings of propriety were outraged. We can imagine the gossip and criticisms that went on in that crowd of Jews when they saw where Jesus had gone. But their aloofness kept them from disturbing Jesus as he taught Zaccheus some needed lessons.

### Salvation Comes to Zaccheus (Verses 8-10)

Before this incident Zaccheus had known something of Jesus; but it does not seem that he would have immediately and abruptly on this occasion announced his change of purpose. It is more likely that he listened quietly to the teaching of Jesus for a time before he announced his purpose. Perhaps his conscience had been bothering him, which caused him to so eagerly listen to what Jesus had to say. The language of Zaccheus does not show clearly whether he had been accustomed to giving half his goods to feed the poor or whether he now proposed to do so, but in either view his liberality is rarely seen. His occupation gave him opportunity to gain much income by extortion; his language shows that he felt guilty. His language also shows genuine repentance. He would restore fourfold to all whom he had defrauded. So many people imagine that they can repent, and still profit by what they had gained by fraud. A man is dishonest if he makes no attempt to restore what he had gained by dishonesty, if restoration is possible. "Be not deceived." "To-day is salvation come to this house." Zaccheus was a Jew; he was not an alien. All he needed was genuine repentance; and his repentance was wholehearted, as the language of Jesus plainly shows. Having now repented he was not a son of Abraham in name only, but in spirit also. But he had been a lost man—lost in sin; and Jesus had come to seek and to save all such men, and the murmurings and criticisms of the strict adherents to Jewish tradition would not stop him from carrying out his mission. And in this disregard for unreasonable criticism Jesus set an example, which people today need very much to imitate. But what will people say? Let them say.

How does the Holy Spirit convert people?  
 What does the Bible say about the Holy Spirit dwelling in Christians?

## Verses 5-7

Who was Nicodemus?  
 What did he say he knew Jesus was, and why?  
 What did Jesus say to him?  
 What did Nicodemus say to that?  
 Jesus said one must be born of what?

## Verse 8

Discuss verse 8.  
 How best to find out what the new birth is?  
 What makes people children of God?

## Acts 1: 8

Repeat Acts 1: 8.  
 To whom was this promise made?  
 Why were the apostles given this power?

## Rom. 8: 26, 27

Name some points of which our infirmity consists.  
 Give as full a discussion of verses 26, 27, as you can.

## Verse 28

Repeat verse 28.  
 What are the "all things" referred to?  
 To whom do these "all things" work together for good?

## Gal. 5: 22-24

Name the fruits of the Spirit.  
 If time allows, define each item mentioned.  
 To whom do these graces belong?

## Verses 25, 26

Discuss the admonitions given in these verses.  
 Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson IV—October 26, 1941

## CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY REGARDING BEVERAGE ALCOHOL

Deut. 5: 32, 33; 11: 26-28; Isa. 28: 1-6; Hab. 2: 12

32 Ye shall observe to do therefore as Jê-hô'vâh your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

33 Ye shall walk in all the way which Jê-hô'vâh your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.

26 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse:

27 The blessing, if ye shall hearken unto the commandments of Jê-hô'vâh your God, which I command you this day;

28 And the curse, if ye shall not hearken unto the commandments of Jê-hô'vâh your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.

1 Woe to the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ê'phrâ-îm, and to the fading flower of his glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley of them that are overcome with wine!

2 Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one; as a tempest of hail, a destroying storm, as a tempest of mighty waters overflowing, will he cast down to the earth with the hand.

3 The crown of pride of the drunkards of Ê'phrâ-îm shall be trodden under foot:

4 And the fading flower of his glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be as the first-ripe fig before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

5 In that day will Jê-hô'vâh of hosts become a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people;

6 And a spirit of justice to him that sitteth in judgment, and strength to them that turn back the battle at the gate.

12 Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and establisheth a city by iniquity!

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people." (Prov. 14: 34.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 2: 2-5.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|             |    |       |   |
|-------------|----|-------|---|
| October 20. | M. | ..... | The Right Way to Live (Deut. 5: 28-33; 11: 26-28) |
| October 21. | T. | ..... | Pride Before Destruction (Isa. 28: 1-6)           |
| October 22. | W. | ..... | Sinuing Against One's Soul (Hab. 2: 9-17)         |
| October 23. | T. | ..... | A King's Folly (Dan. 5: 22-28)                    |
| October 24. | F. | ..... | Civic Responsibility (Rom. 13: 5-14)              |
| October 25. | S. | ..... | Heavenly Citizenship (Phil. 3: 17-21)             |
| October 26. | S. | ..... | Sons of Light (1 Thess. 5: 1-8)                   |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—For Deuteronomy: according to Usher, 1451 B.C.; according to Hales, 1609 B.C. Isaiah began to prophesy about 740 or 735 B.C. However some put the beginning of his prophecy as early as 758 B.C. He must have continued to prophesy until about 700 B.C. Habakkuk prophesied between 625 B.C. and 595 B.C.

*Places.*—The land of Moab and Jerusalem. At least it seems probable that Habakkuk prophesied in Jerusalem.

*Persons.*—Moses, the children of Israel, Isaiah, Habakkuk, and the people of the kingdom of Judah.

*Lesson Links.*—Because Noah's getting drunk is mentioned, we are not therefore authorized to conclude that he was the first man to get drunk. Perhaps his drunkenness would not have been mentioned, had it not been for the developments connected with it. This evil, along with a number of other outstanding evils, has afflicted society all down past ages, and will continue so to do as long as men live in the flesh. The most that righteous people can do is to curb such evils in so far as they can. But the main responsibility rests with the individual, for righteousness is an individual matter. The righteous may help the weakling to overcome his evil habit, if he wants to be helped, or may help him by bringing about conditions in which temptations are not met on every hand.

Sometimes one hears a statement like this: "It does seem that a man of his intelligence would not be guilty of drunkenness." But remaining sober is not so much a matter of intelligence as of moral stamina. People of great brain power indulge in many evil and hurtful practices; they are lacking in moral strength. And it is a difficult matter for one person to develop moral strength in another. Some people do not want to do right; but little can be done for people like that. But there are some moral weaklings who deplore their moral weakness, but have not the moral strength—the will power—to overcome it. They are moral cripples, and should be pitied and helped, just as we would pity and help a person who is crippled and helpless in body. One way to help these moral weaklings—these moral cripples—is to remove temptation from them, in so far as we can. If he could keep from falling for a period of time, he might grow sufficiently strong to stand up without so much help from us, who sometimes overrate our own strength. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." But above all, let us see to it that we do not deliberately put stumbling blocks before these cripples. In the absolute sense you are not your brother's keeper, but you should be your brother's helper.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

## We Must Do as God Commands (Verses 32, 33)

About forty years after the law was given at Sinai, and shortly before the children of Israel were to pass over Jordan into Canaan,

Moses rehearsed the law in the land of Moab. When the law was spoken from Sinai the people were so frightened by the thunders and lightnings, that they asked that Moses, instead of God, henceforth speak to them. (Ex. 20: 18-21.) Moses now repeats the ten commandments, and reminds them of their request that he speak to them, but he now gives more of the details of that request than are given in Exodus. They had then said to Moses, "Go thou near, and hear all that Jehovah our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that Jehovah our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it." God had then said to Moses, "Go say to them, Return ye to your tents. But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandment, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which thou shalt teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess it." The words of our lesson are therefore the words of God spoken by Moses.

God's authority is expressed in his commands; our respect and reverence for him are expressed in our obedience to his commands. And there is just one way to obey a command, and that is to do what it says. To seek some excuse for turning aside from the command, or to try to substitute something in the place of the thing commanded, is plain rebellion. Or to do some things that God commands, and decide that it is not necessary to obey others, is also rebellion. A heart set on that course does not really obey the commands that it seems to obey; obedience must come from the heart—the heart must be submissive to God. And right living—walking in all the way God commands—promotes health and lengthens life now as it did in the days of Israel in Canaan. To follow the unbridled lusts and appetites of the flesh soon destroys the flesh. Insurance companies do not regard such people as good risks. But there is a higher life to preserve than that of the body.

### **A Blessing and a Curse Set Before Them (Deut. 11: 26-28)**

Government presupposes law; and law requires a penalty for its infraction, else there really is no law. And there might as well be no law, if the penalty for its infraction is not exacted. Hence, God pronounces a blessing for obedience, and a curse for disobedience; and the history of Israel shows how faithful God was in fulfilling his promises and threats. God placed inducements in plenty before them to promote obedience, but he forced no one. On these verses Adam Clark comments as follows: "If God had not put it in the power of this people either to obey or disobey; if they had not had a free will, over which they had complete authority, to use it either in the way of willing or nilling; could God, with any propriety, have given such precepts as these, sanctioned with such promises and threatenings? If they were not free agents, they could not be punished for disobedience, nor could they, in any sense of the word, have been rewarded for obedience. A stone is not rewardable because, in obedience to the laws of gravitation, it always tends to the center; nor is it punishable because, in being removed from that center, in its tending or falling towards it again it takes away the life of a man. . . . If ye will obey (for God is ever ready to assist), ye shall live; if ye will disobey and refuse that help, ye shall die. So hath Jehovah spoken, and man cannot reverse it." Let no drunkard say that he cannot resist the temptation to drink. He has a will, and God holds him responsible for the use he makes of it. An earnest desire adds power to the will.

The Israelites were commanded not to go after other gods, and they frequently violated that injunction, and suffered for doing so. Civilized people can have as many gods as any heathen nation ever had, though they do not make forms of them and set them on the mantel. Money is the god of some; and there are many other gods, prominently among which is the god alcohol. Many people look to it to drown their sorrows and troubles, to give them courage, to make them feel rich and important, and to satisfy the cravings of a debauched nature. And what a deceptive and destructive god they have chosen!

### Overcome with Wine (Isa. 28: 1)

After the division of the kingdom, the northern kingdom was frequently called Ephraim, because Ephraim was the dominant tribe in that kingdom. This was the ten tribes who followed Jeroboam. It must have been that there were always some in this kingdom who remained worshipers of Jehovah, but the majority of them paid no more attention to Jehovah after Jeroboam set up the calves as their gods. Of course all sorts of corruption had full sway.

Isaiah did most of his prophesying to Judah, but he addressed some of his teaching and rebukes to the Northern Kingdom, or the Kingdom of Israel. Here he calls that kingdom Ephraim. In pronouncing a woe, he uses two rather striking figures of speech. "The crown of pride" refers to their capital city Samaria. "Ephraim was the chief of the ten tribes of the Kingdom of Israel: the rich valleys allotted to that tribe, were full of fruitful vineyards; Samaria was situated on a hill at the head of them; and its strength and beauty were as a crown and a glory, of which the people were very proud."—Scott. But in view of what was coming upon them, its glorious beauty was as a fading flower. The people of the Kingdom of Israel were referred to as drunkards, as men overcome with wine. When a people reach that stage they are fit only for destruction.

### Samaria Soon to Be Destroyed (Verses 2-4)

The "mighty and strong one" whom the Lord had for their destruction was Shalmaneser king of Assyria. His forces would come against Samaria "as a tempest of hail, a destroying storm, as a tempest of mighty waters overflowing." Such figures of speech are expressive of complete ruin. The whole nation would be swept away before the forces of Assyria. They would be consumed like the first ripe fig which a man sees. In Isa. 8: 7 Isaiah gives this description of their coming destruction: "Behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the River, strong and many, even the king of Assyria and all his glory: and it shall come up over all its channels, and go over all its banks." Assyria would tread underfoot "the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim"; "and the fading flower of his glorious beauty" would be consumed as a man consumes the first ripe fig.

The extent to which the Kingdom of Israel, the Northern Kingdom, had fallen into sin and corruption can be seen only by reading the history of that people. However, a summing up of their degradation and sins is given in the account of the overthrow of the kingdom. Jehovah had repeatedly sent prophets among them, but they would not hear. After mentioning a list of their sins, the historian adds, "And they forsook all the commandments of Jehovah their God,

and made them molten images, even two calves, and made an Asherah, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, to provoke him to anger. Therefore Jehovah was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah only." A clean sweep was made—none were left in their land. This interesting bit of history is recorded in the seventeenth chapter of Second Kings. This complete destruction of Ephraim occurred before the death of Isaiah.

### Promises Concerning Judah (Verses 5, 6)

After Israel was carried into foreign countries only Judah was left; these were the residue of his people. Israel was carried into captivity during the reign in Judah of the good king Hezekiah. Hezekiah tried faithfully to correct the widespread evils in Judah, and succeeded to a great extent. To them Jehovah would be a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty. And because of their reverence for Jehovah the judges would render just decisions; and the armies would be strong in the strength of Jehovah. These promises would be for Judah so long as the people remained true to Jehovah. Threats of evil and promises of good to any nation are conditioned on the conduct of that nation. (Jer. 18: 7-10.) Let us not deceive ourselves into thinking a promise will be fulfilled, no matter what we may do about it. That the promises to Judah were not unconditional is seen in the fact that Judah, too, was later destroyed.

### Woe Upon Ruthless Plunderers (Hab. 2: 12)

The exact time at which Habakkuk wrote is not known, but things said in the first chapter seem to show that he wrote not long before Jerusalem was destroyed by the Chaldeans. The promises to Judah would be no longer applied to them. Justice among them had ceased. "Therefore the law is slacked, and justice doth never go forth; for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore justice goeth forth perverted." (Hab. 1: 4.) The Chaldeans would soon come upon them, and then the Chaldeans would later receive their punishment. The *woe* of verse 12 seems to be directed especially to the Chaldeans, who were building up their whole government by shedding blood. They killed, and slaughtered, and conquered because of greed for power and a larger dominion. The principles of justice and right had no place in their theory, and they had no regard for human suffering. Woe to such a nation; it may flourish for a time, but its fall is certain.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

The body must be kept under or it will go under.

To disobey God is not a risk anyone takes; it is plain spiritual suicide.

Israel fell because of its own internal corruption, and so has many another nation fallen. That is the greatest danger facing our nation today. When God is ruled out of the educational, social, and business life of a nation, all sorts of corruption follows, and corruption means decay and death.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

- What a Christian can do about the drink problem.
- The need of obedience to God in all the relations of life.
- The beginning and fall of the Kingdom of Israel.
- The rise and fall of Babylonia.
- The dangers confronting our government.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
What is the first case of drunkenness mentioned?  
Why do sensible men become drunkards?  
What should we do about moral weaklings?

#### Verses 32, 33

What request did the people make at the giving of the law?  
Of what does the book of Deuteronomy consist?  
How do we respect God's authority?  
What is obedience?

#### Deut. 11: 26-28

Why are penalties necessary in law?  
On what conditions were the blessing and the curse announced?

What gods do people of this country have?

#### Isa. 28: 1

Why was the Kingdom of Israel sometimes called Ephraim?  
Repeat and comment on verse 1.

#### Verses 2-4

How is the destruction of Samaria described?  
Who was the one to overthrow it?  
Tell about the causes that led to its destruction.

#### Verses 5, 6

Read and discuss these verses.

#### Hab. 2: 12

What was the condition of Judah at the time Habakkuk prophesied?  
Who would overthrow Judah and Jerusalem?  
What then would become of that nation?  
Discuss the reflections.

### Lesson V—November 2, 1941

## SIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Gal. 6: 7, 8; 1 John 1: 5 to 2: 6

7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

8 For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life.

5 And this is the message which we have heard from him and announce unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jē'sūs his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

1 My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jē'sūs Christ the righteous:

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.

3 And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected. Hereby we know that we are in him:

6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—*"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* (1 John 1: 9.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Psalm 51: 1-13.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS.**—

|          |     |    |       |  |
|----------|-----|----|-------|--|
| October  | 27. | M. | ..... | What Sin Is (Rom. 14: 13-23)                   |
| October  | 28. | T. | ..... | The Harvest of Sin (Gal. 6: 6-10)              |
| October  | 29. | W. | ..... | Confessing Sin (1 John 1: 5-10)                |
| October  | 30. | T. | ..... | Cleansing from Sin (Isa. 1: 16-20)             |
| October  | 31. | F. | ..... | The Blessedness of Forgiveness (Psalm 32: 1-7) |
| November | 1.  | S. | ..... | New Creatures in Christ (2 Cor. 5: 14-19)      |
| November | 2.  | S. | ..... | Sin No More! (John 8: 3-11)                    |

## LESSON SETTINGS

**Time.**—For the letter to the Galatians, A.D. 55 or 56. The time of the writing of the first epistle of John is not known. Some conclude from chapter 2, verse 18, that it was written shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, but that is not definite.

**Places.**—The letter to the Galatians was written at Ephesus. Where John wrote his first epistle is not known, but it was probably written at Ephesus.

**Persons.**—Paul and John, and the people to whom they wrote. As John makes no reference to the law of Moses, nor to the Jews and their traditions, it is supposed that he wrote for the especial benefit of Gentile churches.

**Lesson Links.**—Though the evil results of sin are almost constantly realized in our own sufferings and disappointments and its devastating results are seen on every hand, it is hard for us to realize the enormity of sin. The enormity of sin is seen—

I. In the cost of sin. Were it not for sin, we would not have to buy locks, or build costly vaults for the protection of money and valuable papers; we would not have to spend money in legislating against crime, or in publishing laws against crime; we would not have to hire a police force, or spend money in prosecuting criminals, or in building jails and penitentiaries, or in feeding and clothing the criminals; we would not have to spend vast sums of money in building forts and navies, or in maintaining armies and navy forces, or in the manufacture of arms. There would be no such thing as the destructiveness of wars. Sin is the most costly thing in the world.

II. In what it does for us as individuals. It hardens our hearts, sears our consciences, destroys our health, makes us nuisances to one another, destroys homes, and makes some people lower than beasts. It brings sorrow to many hearts that would otherwise be happy. It arrays us against God and all good people, and puts us in league with the devil and all the hosts of hell. It unfits a person for association with decent people.

III. In what it cost to redeem us from sin—the blood of Christ.

IV. In the punishment due on account of sin. Some think eternal punishment is too much punishment. That is because they do not realize how awful and destructive sin is. God punishes according to the demerit of sin—he does not punish unjustly. It is better—

much better—to escape the punishment for sin than to complain of its severity. We can avoid that punishment if we earnestly desire to do so.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Sowing to the Flesh or Spirit (Verses 7, 8)

We miss the point of these verses, if we fail to connect them with verse 6, which says, "But let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." Or a more literal rendering of the Greek is, "Let him that is being taught orally the word," etc. That is one way to help bear one another's burdens, of which he had just spoken. Contribute of your good things to the one who is teaching you the word of God. That goes against the grain of some; and it is sometimes inconvenient for any of us to do so, yet it must be done. God has so ordered it; and if we think we can shirk that duty, and still be an approved servant of God, we deceive ourselves. A deceived person is blind to results. It does not relieve a man of the consequences of his deeds to be deceived in doing them, whether he is self-deceived or deceived by another. "If the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit." If a man refuses to contribute to the one who speaks to him the word of God and spends his money for his own satisfaction, pride, and pleasure, he is sowing to the flesh. The connection shows that this is the special point Paul had in mind. Paul states a universal law, as applicable in this case. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." That law, which we all know to be true in the natural world, Paul here applies to the spiritual nature. If it were not true, no farmer or gardener would know how to proceed. That law cannot be mocked with success. If you sow a certain seed by mistake, the harvest will be according to the seed you sow, and not according to your intentions. You were honest in what you did? So were the seed you sowed, and that is what counts.

Paul mentions two fields in which we sow; the flesh is one. By using the capital S the translators show that they understood Paul to mean the Holy Spirit. (The use of capital letters at the beginning of the word spirit depends entirely on the judgment of the translators, for in the original manuscripts every letter in every word was a capital letter.) The Holy Spirit is not a field to which we sow; and as flesh and spirit here are used in contrast, the spirit mentioned must be man's own spirit. To this critical commentators agree. The flesh has its needs, as well as its excessive desires and passion. A man does not have to indulge in moral corruption and degradation in order to sow to the flesh; he can spend his money and time for pleasures, worldly amusements, and luxuries. The rich man of Luke 16: 19-31 is an example of this manner of sowing to the flesh: "Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day." He spent his money freely for his own satisfaction, as so many do today. He sowed to the flesh.

There is a baser sort of sowing to the flesh—spending money on drinking and immoral practices. These drag a man down morally to lower levels than do the more refined worldly things. But no matter what sort of fleshly gratification we strive for, the end thereof is decay and death. To sow to the spirit—to spend our time and money for spiritual gain—is to gain eternal life as the

harvest. We may ignore this fundamental law, but we cannot change it, or evade its inevitable consequences. As is the sowing, so will be the reaping. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." You cannot sow to the flesh and to the spirit at the same time. To sow to the flesh drags you down lower; to sow to the spirit lifts you up higher; and you are the one that makes the choice.

### Walking in Darkness, or in the Light (1 John 1: 5-7)

A message is an announcement, a proclamation. A message implies a messenger, and also a sender. Jesus came as a messenger from God. John the Baptist was sent as a messenger to announce the coming of Christ and his kingdom. Inspired men were God's messengers, sent by him to deliver whatever message he gave them. Strictly speaking God now sends no messages, nor is the preacher God's messenger; neither does he bring a message.

"God is light." In the preceding verses John had spoken of what he had seen and heard. Now he begins to explain more fully the import and content of this message. All light emanates from God. There is nothing impure or hurtful in light; and it enables us to see the beauties of nature, and how to move about. John, of course, has special reference to spiritual light. He is the source of all the light we have as to our origin, our real nature, and our destiny. He gives light on our pathway, so that we know how we ought to live. Knowledge is light. Ignorance and sin—how dark they are! Science and philosophy are useful in their proper sphere, but they give us no spiritual light. Nothing of a dark nature comes from God—"in him is no darkness at all." As God is light, we cannot have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness. "If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." That language is plain and emphatic. On the other hand, there is a way in which we may have fellowship with God. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." At first glance, it might seem that the fellowship here mentioned is the fellowship between Christians; but the context shows that it is the fellowship between God and the one who walks in the light. It is said in contrast with verse 6. We cannot walk in darkness and have fellowship with God; but if we walk in the light, we have fellowship with him, for he is in the light. And in that relationship "the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin." This states a continuous process, and shows that Christians do sin. The genuine Christian does not surrender to sin—he fights it; and yet he does sin. But the earnest Christian repents of his sins, and is cleansed by the blood of Jesus.

### How to Be Forgiveness (Verses 8-10)

It would seem that some in John's day claimed to live sinless lives, even as some do today. It seems that it is easy for some people to deceive themselves into thinking every thing they do is right. On that point John is plain and emphatic: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." "The truth" here seems to refer to the gospel. If a man had the knowledge of the gospel in him, he would know better than to say that he had no sin. But even though we sin, there is a way to forgiveness—"if we confess our sins." This most certainly refers to con-

fessing our sins to God, and not to man. To confess a sin implies repentance of that sin, and prayer for its forgiveness. And the one who does not think he needs to confess—the one who says he has no sin to confess—makes God a liar, for God says we do sin. And if his word was in us, we would know better than to say we have no sin. It is a serious matter to hold to a theory that makes God a liar, for to contradict God's word is really to accuse him of lying.

### **We Have an Advocate with the Father (1 John 2: 1, 2)**

Many times we sin ignorantly; none but an all-wise being could keep from doing that. The more we know as to what sin is and its consequences, the better are we able to keep from sinning. To that end John wrote. But there is always a possibility of sinning. That is why we need and why we have an Advocate with the Father. Why should we have one to plead our cause, if we did not need him? Jesus our Savior, the friend of all, is our Advocate. And yet he cannot, and will not, help us, if we persist in sin.

He is also the propitiation for our sins, and for the sins of the whole world. A propitiation is an appeasement, that which renders more favorable. The law of God had been broken, and divine justice outraged. Death was the penalty, for the moral government of God was at stake. The death of Jesus for us made it possible for God to be just while justifying the one who had sinned. He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, in that his death opened the way to salvation for all men. Jesus purchased our redemption; and he now, so to speak, holds in his own hands our sentence of death, but releases us from that sentence only when we give ourselves to him to be his servants.

### **"Hereby We Know That We Know Him" (Verses 3-6)**

John speaks with great assurance: "We know that we know him." Too often we speak of faith and knowledge, as if they both could not exist at the same time. To believe in God means much more than to believe that he is; it is to have confidence in him, to put our trust in him. And the better we know him the more faith we have in him. Knowledge, instead of superceding faith, increases it. That is true especially with reference to faith in a person. We come to know God by keeping his commandments; if we keep not his commandments, we do not know him. "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." And yet so often the idea is presented, even from pulpits, that if we love God and trust him, it makes little, or no, difference about the commands. According to John, such teaching advertises the teacher as a liar. Neither can we separate love from obedience. Indeed love is perfected in obedience. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5: 3.) And it is by keeping his commandments that we know that we are in him. And the one who claims to abide in him, should follow his example: "walk even as he walked." There is therefore no love for God in him who does not obey God. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." "If a man love me, he will keep my word." (John 14: 21, 23.)

## SOME REFLECTIONS

A passage of scripture teaches just what it teaches, and we do it violence when we try to make it teach something else; and that is sin.

"Sin is lawlessness." (1 John 3: 4.) It is doing things without regard to law, or doing things outside the limits of the law—going contrary to the law. "All unrighteousness is sin." (1 John 5: 17.) Hence, any failure to do right, any failure to live as God directs us to live, is sin.

We may sin in thought, word, and deed. It is a sin to entertain and cherish evil thoughts. It is also a sin not to think at all; it is our duty to use that God-given faculty for good. We may sin by saying wrong things. All realizes this. But it is also a sin not to speak at times. As an example: If you can clear the good name of one who is being slandered, and you remain quiet, you become a party to the slander.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

What is sin? Find examples.  
The destructiveness and cost of sin.  
Sinful thinking.  
Sinful speaking.  
Sinful deeds.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Name ways in which the enormity of sin is manifested.

#### Verses 7, 8

What does the preceding verse say?  
How do verses 7 and 8 relate to verse 6?  
What is here said about sowing?  
How is this sowing done?  
To what do we sow and how? Discuss these points.

#### 1 John 1: 5-7

What is a message?  
What does John say of God?  
How may we have fellowship with God?

#### Verses 8-10

Discuss verse 8.  
To whom are we to confess our sins?  
What is implied in confessing sin?

#### 1 John 2: 1, 2

Discuss the propitiation.

#### Verses 3-6

Repeat verse 3.  
How may faith and knowledge go together?  
How is love related to obedience?  
Discuss the reflections.

### Lesson VI—November 9, 1941

## FAITH AND REPENTANCE

Luke 15: 11-24

11 And he said, A certain man had two sons:

12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country; and there he wasted his substance with riotous living.

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

17 But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger!

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight:

19 I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

20 And he arose, and came to his father. But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

23 And bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and make merry:

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Repent ye, and believe in the gospel.” (Mark 1: 15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 32: 1-5.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|             |    |   |
|-------------|----|---|
| November 3. | M. | Father and Son (Luke 15: 11-24)                     |
| November 4. | T. | John Preaches Repentance (Matt. 3: 1-9)             |
| November 5. | W. | Jesus Preaches Repentance (Mark 1: 14, 15)          |
| November 6. | T. | Paul Preaches Repentance and Faith (Acts 20: 17-24) |
| November 7. | F. | The Way of Salvation (Luke 7: 41-50)                |
| November 8. | S. | Saved Through Faith (Eph. 2: 1-10)                  |
| November 9. | S. | A Triumph of Faith (Acts 3: 11-17)                  |

## LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—A.D. 30 or 31.

Place.—Perea.

Persons.—Jesus, the Pharisees, and the scribes.

Lesson Links.—Read again the Golden Text. Expressions like that have been a puzzle to many. They raise the question: “How can a person repent before he believes in God?” But these Jews believed in God, and were in covenant relationship with him. They had sinned against God—had sinned against the law they were under. Now a new order of things was to be ushered in; they were soon to be under the gospel and the reign of Christ. It was proper for them to repent of these sins against God, and then accept the gospel.

There is one faith (Eph. 4: 5); but this *one faith* may, and does, exist in different degrees. There is little faith (Matt. 6: 30), and even dead faith (James 2: 17). Or this *one faith* may be great (Matt. 8: 10), or it may be made perfect (James 2: 22).

Faith—any faith, in anything—comes through information that one considers reliable. “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.) “And it came to pass in Iconium that they entered together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake that a great multitude both of Jews and of Greeks believed.” (Acts 14: 1.) “And how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? . . . So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.” (Rom. 10: 14-17.)

To believe with all the heart means much; for the heart includes the intellect, the emotions, and the will. We think, ponder, and understand with the heart. (Matt. 9: 4; Luke 2: 19; Matt. 13: 15.)

These are intellectual processes. We love, hate, rejoice, etc., with the heart. (Matt. 22: 37; Psalms 105: 25; 119: 111.) These are emotional processes. The heart wills, purposes, determines. (Ex. 35: 22; Dan. 1: 8; 1 Cor. 7: 37.) Unless all these are involved a person does not believe with all his heart; and when a person believes with all his heart, he begins at once to obey the Lord.

Faith that does not express itself through the will is of no value. It does no good merely to say to a hungry and naked person, "Be ye warmed and filled." "Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself." (James 2: 14-17.) Dead—separated from God. "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren?" It is barren of results, and barren of blessings. The religion of the Lord Jesus Christ is intended to make people better. God does not put a premium on doing nothing.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### A Younger Son Demands His Portion of Goods (Verses 11, 12)

The fifteenth chapter of Luke seems to be a record of one discourse. The force of the present lesson will be better seen if we notice what gave rise to the speech; and that is stated in the first two verses: "Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto him to hear him. And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." Jesus then delivered this discourse, not so much to justify his own course, as to show how unreasonable and bigoted were the Pharisees and the scribes. The parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin precede this lesson. These parables, together with our present lesson are designed also to show how anxious the Lord is to recover that which is lost. "I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no repentance." (Verse 7.) In this Jesus did not mean to teach that some were so righteous that they did not need repentance, for all have sinned; but he was, for the purpose of the lesson, taking these Pharisees and scribes at their own valuation, so that they might really see themselves in their true colors.

It is said that a son, having reached the state of manhood, could legally demand his portion of the inheritance. The oldest son would receive double what any other son received. In this case there were only two sons. The younger son had grown restless. He did not like the restraint of parental advice. Perhaps he said, like many today, "I have my own life to live; how I live it is nobody's business." "Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me." He might have thought at the time, that he would engage in some sort of business when he found a place that suited him. "And he divided unto them his living"—his means of making a living. The older brother decided to remain at home.

#### The Younger Son Goes into a Far Country (Verse 13)

"Not many days after"—as soon as he could get everything ready to depart, he took his journey into a far country. He wanted to get out of his own country. Likely he was tired of home restraints, and also tired of religious restraints. As he considered it no one's

business what he did, he wanted to go among the Gentiles where no one would be concerned about what he did. He could do as he pleased, and not have to answer the questions of his fellow Jews. Evidently he thought he was going to find freedom. How deceptive that thought is! So many people think that a life of sin is freedom. They slander God by thinking that he wants to put a hard and heavy yoke on them; whereas God offers the only true freedom. "Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin." (John 8: 34.) We cannot escape being a servant, but we can choose whom or what we will serve. "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.)

"And there"—in that foreign country—"he wasted his substance with riotous living." It does not mean that he spent his substance in tumults and riots; he spent it in prodigal living—in wasteful spending of what he had. And in this sort of living he gained for himself the name of "Prodigal Son." Going away from home was not prodigal; prodigal has reference to his reckless and extravagant expenditure of what he had. Of course, in such a course of life he would gather about him others who would help him in his spending. He would not sit around alone, and spend so much on himself. It seems that he abandoned himself completely to a life of indulgence and debauchery; he set no limits on himself. In such abandon he would not think much about home, nor about the sin of it all. It does not seem that he ever took time to think that his money would not last long at the rate he was spending, nor to ponder on what he would do when it was all gone. Such a course of life usually blinds a person to its certain results. He reaches the point where he has no genuine affections nor regard for anyone; and even those who help him spend his money care nothing for him. The prodigal eventually finds himself without resources and without friends. But let us not feel too superior; "for we also once were foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another." (Tit. 3: 3.)

### He Meets with Famine and Hunger (Verses 14-16)

In those days it was not so easy as now to preserve a surplus of food supplies. Hence, crop failures and pestilences brought famine quickly. The young man of our lesson had nothing to buy food with, had there been a supply. In a year of famine there would be very little demand for labor, and no one could pay much for what little labor he might need. "He began to be in want." For the first time in his life he began to feel the pinch of poverty and the pangs of hunger. Notice his humiliation: "And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine." This citizen was, of course, a Gentile, for he raised hogs. This young Jew therefore suffered a double humiliation—he had to work for a "Gentile dog," and had to feed unclean hogs. And it is likely that some of the food his employer furnished him was hog meat. He was not furnished sufficient food, and so he became desperately hungry. It is puzzling as to why the translators put "husks" in the text, when they themselves tell us in the marginal reading that the Greek word means, *the pods of the carob tree*. Even so, these pods are said to be a very poor grade of food. How-

ever a man can become so hungry that he will eat anything that has the promise of food value, even though it be almost worthless. This young Jew would gladly have eaten the food of hogs, but no man gave to him. Perhaps he dared not eat any of the portion the master, his master, had measured out for the swine. His companions who helped him to spend his money cared nothing for him. They stuck to him so long as they could use him and his money for their own gratification; when they could get no more out of him, they discarded him. But there are many today, men who are in good standing as businessmen, preachers, and politicians, who have no use for a man they cannot use.

### **The Young Man Came to Himself (Verses 17-19)**

"But when he came to himself." This is spoken as if the young man had been deranged in mind or unconscious. In a sense he had been both deranged and unconscious. It does not mean that he was insane, in the common acceptance of that term; but he was certainly not using common sense when he was spending all he had in debauchery. And so blinded was he in his debaucheries, that he was not conscious of his true condition. But he came to himself—took a sober view of matters, and saw his real condition. He could now see what a fool he had been. His first thought then was of his father's house; and when he thought of home in contrast with his present condition, a feeling of unworthiness came over him. Yet he must go home. "I will arise and go to my father." He would confess his sins, and ask to be only a servant in his father's house. He felt unworthy to be called a son. Here is genuine heart-cleansing repentance—humiliation, remorse, a feeling of helplessness, and a determination to return to his father and confess his wrongs. When a sinner sees himself as he is, he will have a deep feeling of humiliation, remorse, and helplessness; he then determines to quit his sins. In that state of mind he comes to God with confession on his lips and a spirit of obedience in his heart. His faith now embraces his will, and through that will it controls his life. And that is the degree of faith that makes men better, and brings to them the blessings of God.

### **The Young Man Goes Home (Verses 20, 21)**

Weak from dissipation and hunger, the young man starts home, eager to reach home and yet ashamed to go to his father. He now had no demands to make—only confessions now and a plea for a place as a hired servant. Even the hired servants in that home had plenty, *and to spare*. As a hired servant, he would not have to go hungry. But how different from his going away!

"Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight." Of course he meant that he had sinned against God—the Jews were averse to speaking the name of God. But the father had already ignored any confession that the son might make. His father had seen him long before he reached the house, and had run to meet him, "and was moved with compassion." The love of father had not died. Many weary and anxious days the father had brooded over that wayward son; but he was home now, and what else mattered? This is meant to show how heaven rejoices over the return of the sinner. Men do not have to beg God to accept the returning penitent.

### The Dead Is Alive—the Lost Is Found (Verses 22-24)

The Pharisees and the scribes would have counted this young man a sinner, and unworthy of their notice. Over against their self-righteousness and haughtiness was a father's love. The best robe was put on this son; a ring, as an honor, a mark of distinction, was placed on his finger. A feast was made in honor of his return. How unlike the critics of Jesus!

"For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." He was dead, and yet he returned home. Some religionists put such undue stress on the idea that the sinner is dead, that they deny his ability to return. The sinner is dead to God just as this young man was dead to his father; and the dead sinner can come to God just as this dead son came home.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

The text printed in our lesson does not give the complete story. The older brother acted the part of the Pharisees and the scribes. He did not think the young son was fit to be received again into the home where he stayed. He did not recognize him as brother—referred to him as *this thy son*. In this the older son showed no respect for his father. He put his own prejudices up against his father's love and judgment. He would not so belittle himself as to have anything to do with such a wayward boy.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The attitude of the Pharisees and the scribes toward "sinners." The mourners' bench exercises in the light of this parable.

What was wrong with the elder brother?

In what sense is a sinner dead?

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Discuss the Golden Text.  
Name some degrees of faith.  
Show how faith comes.  
What is it to believe with all the heart?  
Why is faith only worthless?

#### Verses 11, 12

What brought out the speech of this lesson?  
Discuss the demands of the younger son.

#### Verse 13

Discuss verse 13.

#### Verses 14-16

In what did the young man engage?  
Describe the results.  
Why was his employment so humiliating?

#### Verses 17-19

What is meant by the expression, "came to himself"?  
Tell what he planned to do. What does it illustrate?

#### Verses 20, 21

Tell about his reception at home.

#### Verses 22-24

How was his reception by the father a rebuke to the Pharisees and scribes?  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson VII—November 16, 1941

## UNION WITH CHRIST

John 15: 1-10

- 1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.  
 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit.  
 3 Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you.  
 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me.  
 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing.  
 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.  
 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.  
 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples.  
 9 Even as the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you: abide ye in my love.  
 10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Abide in me, and I in you.” (John 15: 4.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Eph. 3: 14-21.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|              |    |  |
|--------------|----|--|
| November 10. | M. | Union with Christ (John 15: 1-10)              |
| November 11. | T. | One Body in Christ (Rom. 12: 1-8)              |
| November 12. | W. | One Spirit in Christ (Eph. 4: 1-7)             |
| November 13. | T. | Having the Mind of Christ (Phil. 2: 1-11)      |
| November 14. | F. | Alive with Christ (Eph. 2: 13-22)              |
| November 15. | S. | Members of Christ (1 Cor. 6: 15-20)            |
| November 16. | S. | Partakers of the Divine Nature (2 Pet. 1: 1-8) |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—A.D. 31. The text of our lesson is a part of a speech Jesus made on the night of his betrayal.

*Place.*—Jerusalem.

*Persons.*—Jesus and his disciples.

*Lesson Links.*—In the parable of the vine and the branches Jesus was speaking to his disciples. As the lesson was spoken on the night of his betrayal, and but a few hours before the law was to end at the cross, it could not have been meant for their guidance under the law of Moses. It was to have its application after the gospel dispensation was ushered in. It was a lesson to those who would then be in Christ. The disciples needed to know that, even though he was gone from them, he would still be in close union with them. They also needed to know that the continuance of that union depended on them; his part of it was sure. But the lesson was not meant solely for the small group of disciples then present with him, but for all who would become his disciples. But a person must first be in Christ before he can abide in him.

The alien sinner is not in Christ. There can be no union between Christ and the disobedient and rebellious; there can be no union between darkness and light, nor between sin, and holiness and purity. The one who does not believe in Christ cannot be in union with him; neither can the impenitent man, the man who cherishes sin in his heart, be in union with him. For two to be in union with each

other there must be agreement. And it is plain to all that a man out of Christ cannot abide in him. It is therefore important to the sinner, the man out of Christ, to know how to enter into Christ. It is evident that there must be a complete surrender to Christ, a whole-hearted desire to live in harmony with his will. If we let God's word settle the matter, everything is plain enough. "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." (Gal. 3: 26, 27.) "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" (Rom. 6: 3.) Paul here plainly shows that a man who does not know this is ignorant. Having been baptized into Christ, we can then, if we try, maintain union with him.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### Jesus the Vine—the Father the Husbandman (Verses 1, 2)

"I am the true vine." Is not this equal to saying, "I am the true Christ"? He is the living vine, the living Christ; all others claiming to be such are false pretenders. "My father is the husbandman." Here Jesus speaks of his close relation to the Father. The Father is the proprietor, the keeper of the vine or vineyard. He cares for the vine. "The scene must be kept in mind. The Lord and his disciples had just eaten the last supper. He had said, 'Arise, let us go hence.' (John 14: 31.) They had risen, but were still standing in the room. On the table, from which they had just risen, was the 'fruit of the vine,' and the Lord had said that he would not drink it again upon the earth. In the Old Testament, the vine is often used as the type of Israel, planted and tended by the Almighty as the husbandman. (See Isa. 5: 1; Psalm 80; Jer. 2: 21.) Israel, however, had proved a wild and fruitless vine. Instead of it, therefore, Christ had now been planted by the Father as the true vine."—Johnson.

The careful husbandman sees to it that fruitless branches of the vine are taken away—pruned off. A whole vine, if it bears no fruit, as in the case of Israel, is grubbed up and destroyed root and branch. "And every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit." Even the fruit-bearing branch must have attention—excess growth must be removed to get the best results. "Cleanseth it"—prunes it.

#### "The Branch Cannot Bear Fruit of Itself" (Verses 3, 4)

Jesus had not yet told who were the branches of the vine, but in the third verse he gives a hint of further disclosures. "Already ye are clean," already ye have been pruned and dressed for fruit bearing. They were thus prepared for bearing fruit "because of the word which I have spoken unto you." He had already used the word as a pruning knife. By his teaching he had caused them to leave off evil practices, and many wrong notions. But every one who knows anything about grape culture knows that one pruning is not enough—the pruning must be kept up so long as the vine is expected to bear fruit. Evil ideas and hurtful practices must be continuously pruned from the character of the Christian.

"Abide in me, and I in you." The idea is, abide in me that I may abide in you. His abiding in them depended on their abiding in him. We cannot follow our own ways and notions, and abide in him. "Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God

been perfected. Hereby we know that we are in him: he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked." (1 John 2: 5, 6.) "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John 14: 23.) These scriptures make the Lord's abiding in us depend on us. It is not too much therefore to say that the Lord's abiding in us now depends entirely upon us. He will certainly keep his word, if we keep his commandments.

A branch severed from the vine cannot live; it draws its sap, its life, from the vine, and must remain connected with it to live. Severed from the vine, it cannot bear fruit; "so neither can ye, except ye abide in me." The deeds that a person does is the fruit of his life, whether evil or good; but a person cannot bear good fruit, Christian fruit, except he abide in Christ, no matter what his professions may be. As Jesus was talking to his disciples, his language shows that a disciple of Christ may so conduct himself as to lose his connection with Christ. There is danger that we get a one-sided view of the matter. We may conclude that the whole thing depends on us, and that the Lord gives us no help; but some put so much stress on the Lord's work in the matter, that they come to the conclusion that man has no responsibility in the matter at all. The Lord's part is sure, if we make our part sure. We cannot do his part, and he will not do our part.

### We Must Abide in Christ or Perish (Verses 5, 6)

To emphasize the disciple's relation to him Jesus repeats the statement that he is the vine, and adds, "ye are the branches." It is strange that anybody could ever read into this language of the Savior the idea that denominations are the branches he had in mind. There were no denominations then; at least, there were no denominations professing to be Christians. Besides, Jesus said, "Ye are the branches." And in verse 6 he says, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." This puts the matter so plain that no one can misunderstand—Jesus is the vine, and disciples are the branches. When a man becomes a Christian, he thereby becomes a branch of the true vine; and he is then expected to bear much fruit; but to do so, he must remain vitally connected with the vine. The service we render, the deeds we do, is the fruit we bear. If we do not remain connected with Christ, we cannot serve God; we therefore can bear no fruit of righteousness.

"Cast forth as a branch, and is withered." There is no such thing as a branch being nominally connected with the vine, as some would have us believe. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch." He was a branch—he had been in Christ, but did not abide in him. If he had not been in Christ, he would not have been a branch at all. To try to make this parable fit the doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy, is to make the Savior talk foolishness. In that parable Jesus said just what he wanted to say. The branch that bears no fruit, the branch that does not abide in him, is cast aside, and burned. If the plain teaching of the New Testament was to the effect that a child of God could not so apostatize as to be lost, there would be some reason for trying to show that this parable did not teach the possibility of apostasy; but the New Testament shows plainly that a child of God can apostatize and be lost. Notice

this one scripture: "For if ye live after the flesh, ye must die." This cannot refer to physical death, for men die physically no matter how they live. Other scriptures are as plain as that passage.

### Conditions of Acceptable Prayer (Verse 7)

In verse 7 Jesus turns aside from the parable, and gives encouragement to prayer. Many passages of scripture teach that God hears prayer, and yet he does not hear every kind of prayer. The prayer must be sincere. A formal prayer is really no prayer. "If ye abide in me"—abiding in Christ is one of the conditions, or elements, of acceptable prayer. To abide in Christ is to abide in his teaching. We cannot disobey his word and expect to be heard. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination." (Prov. 28: 9.) "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear." (Psalm 66: 18.) Hence, the word of Christ must abide in us, not merely in our memory, but must so abide in us as to become a part of our thinking and acting. It must be a permanent guest in our hearts, a welcome guest. There is such a thing as being hospitable to the word of God; we must not only welcome it into our hearts, but enjoy its presence. Of course, in all our prayers, we must recognize the truth that God knows what is best for us to have, and we should be able to say sincerely, "Not my will, but thine, be done." Many prayers are formal and insincere, and many are made up of petitions for things the Lord never intended that anyone should have.

### Glorifying God (Verse 8)

In a very real sense no mortal can add to God's glory, nor take from it. In his own being he is glorious beyond our powers to describe or even to conceive. But in doing his will, in bearing fruit as he designed that we should, we reflect glory on his gospel and his church. When some far-reaching plan works out as its designer intended, it reflects glory on him; and so with a great and complicated machine. Now God set in operation a great and far-reaching plan; and when we bear fruit as he intended that we should, glory is reflected on him. No one was ever saved solely for his own sake, but saved that he might be instrumental in helping others in their needs. One of their chief needs is salvation through Christ. Even in the matter of saving others we can be of service. "Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. 4: 16.) "He that is wise winneth souls." (Prov. 11: 30.) "My brethren, if any among you err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins." (James 5: 19, 20.) There are various lines of activity in which we may bear fruit, but the main purpose of the gospel and the church is to save men and women from sin and eternal death. Hence, every Christian should be able to teach others.

### How to Abide in His Love (Verses 9, 10)

God loves the sinner, not because of what he is, but because of what he can be made into. God loved his Son, Jesus, because of what he was, and Jesus loved his disciples because of what they were. They were his own, and he therefore loved them with a special love. "Abide ye in my love," that is, continue to love me. Love must

go both ways. It is tragical to see a person love another with a sincere love when that love is not returned. We can abide in the love of Christ by keeping his commandments; but what if we do not keep his commandments? It is impossible to separate a man from his character. Certainly Christ does not love a sinful and rebellious character; he cannot love a corrupt man as he is. Among the things that God hates are these: "A false witness that uttereth lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren." (Prov. 6: 16-19.) To his faithful servants God is love; to the corrupt and rebellious he is a consuming fire. (Heb. 12: 29.) It is best that we accept God in the character he reveals himself to be, and not to try to make of him a character to suit our own notions. If we keep his commandments we will abide in his love; and that is sufficient comfort for all sincere servants of God.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

It will richly repay anyone to study the different terms applied to Christ in the Bible; they are all highly significant. The terms applied to him in a figurative sense are as instructive as are the others. But this caution should be kept in mind: Do not force a meaning into one term that would make your conception of him out of harmony with some of the other descriptive names. To illustrate: A shepherd and a lamb are quite different, and yet Christ is both.

If you are inclined to think that denominations are the branches Jesus spoke of, a little reflection will show you how impossible that is. The parable itself shows that individuals, not denominations, are meant. And the diversity among the denominations also show that they are not branches of the vine. No one ever saw a vine with branches so different as are the denominations. They are not alike, and they bear different kinds of fruit. It is impossible for them to be natural branches of the same vine.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

A study of the names applied to Christ.

Why is pruning vines necessary?

How do people enter into Christ?

How abide in him?

The fruit-bearing church member.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

To whom does the lesson of this parable apply?

What must one do before he can abide in Christ?

#### Verses 1, 2

When was this parable delivered?

Discuss verses 1 and 2.

#### Verses 3, 4

Through what instrumentality had the disciples been cleansed, or pruned?

Why must pruning be kept up?

How do we know that we are in Christ?

On what condition will Christ dwell in us?

Discuss verse 4.

#### Verses 5, 6

Who are the branches of this vine?  
Give proof.

What becomes of the fruitless branch?  
Give some other scripture showing that a disciple may fall away and be lost.

#### Verses 7, 8

Discuss prayer as set forth in verse 7.  
Also discuss verse 8.

Show that a Christian may be instrumental in saving others.

#### Verses 9, 10

In what sense does God love the sinner?

How may we abide in the love of Christ?

What is God's attitude toward evil-doers?

Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson VIII—November 23, 1941

## PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING

Matt. 6: 5-15; Eph. 5: 20; 1 Thess. 5: 16-18

5 And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward.

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

7 And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gēn'tiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

20 Giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jē'sūs Christ to God, even the Father;

16 Rejoice always;

17 Pray without ceasing;

18 In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jē'sūs to you-ward.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks."*  
(1 Thess. 5: 17, 18.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 107: 23-31.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|              |    |  |
|--------------|----|--|
| November 17. | M. | Prayer with Thanksgiving (Psalm 103: 1-5)        |
| November 18. | T. | Two Prayers in Contrast (Luke 18: 9-14)          |
| November 19. | W. | Thanksgiving for Food (Acts 27: 33-36)           |
| November 20. | T. | Thanksgiving in Every Prayer (Phil. 1: 3-11)     |
| November 21. | F. | Thanking God for Everything (Eph. 5: 15-21)      |
| November 22. | S. | Thanksgiving and Thanks Living (2 Cor. 9: 10-15) |
| November 23. | S. | Worship and Thanksgiving (Psalm 95: 1-11)        |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—For Matthew, A.D. 27 or 28; for Ephesians, dates given by different authors vary from A.D. 61 to A.D. 65; for First Thessalonians, A.D. 55.

*Places.*—The Sermon on the Mount was evidently delivered on a mountain in Galilee. The letter to the Ephesians was written at Rome. The letter to the Thessalonians was written at Corinth.

*Persons.*—Jesus, his disciples, the multitude, Paul, and the brethren at Ephesus and Thessalonica. That the multitude was present when Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount is shown by what is said in the last two verses of the seventh chapter of Matthew.

*Lesson Links.*—Prayer is one of the essential parts of the Christian's life. It is a part of his righteousness; hence his praying comes under the general principle set forth by the Savior in these words: "Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen

of them: else ye have no reward with your Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 6: 1.) When a Christian does anything to gain the applause of men, that is the only reward he gets. It does seem that in praying to God the thought of gaining the applause of men would not so much as enter his mind. Yet there is danger along that line, else Jesus would not have given this warning: "And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward." (Matt. 6: 5.) A man may attempt to make an eloquent speech in his pretending to pray, so as to have people praise the eloquence of the prayer; this is, to a pious man, an unthinkable thing.

"And it came to pass, as he was praying in a certain place, that when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples." (Luke 11: 1.) They knew they should pray, else they would not have asked the Lord to teach them to pray. Of course they meant for him to teach them how to pray and for what to pray. That sort of teaching is still needed. So many people now think that God is so limited by the laws of nature that he cannot answer prayer. In your mind place the teachings of God's word over against that theory.

"But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting: for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord; a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." (James 1: 5-7.) "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4: 6, 7.) "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen." (Eph. 3: 20, 21.)

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Against Praying for Show (Verse 5)

Let us not put a wrong construction on the word "stand"; for a person can stand on his knees as well as on his feet. In his prayer of dedication of the temple, "Solomon stood before the altar of Jehovah in the presence of all the assembly of Israel." And yet "when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto Jehovah, he arose from before the altar of Jehovah, from kneeling on his knees." (1 Kings 8: 22, 54.) Solomon was standing on his knees. Besides, the word "stand," both in the English and the Greek, frequently means to take a position on a certain point or for a certain purpose. A man frequently speaks about his *stand* on certain questions, and the army takes a *stand*. Jesus was here speaking of secret, or individual, prayers, as the next verse shows. In this country if a man should stop on the corner of the streets, and take a position to pray his secret prayer, people would laugh at him; but not so in Jerusalem at that time; for that was a religious city. The injunction is against our doing

anything to make people think we are very devout and prayerful. To do so is to be hypocritical; a hypocrite has no favor with the Lord no matter how much people may praise him. There were many "pious" hypocrites in those days. Jesus makes this sweeping statement about the scribes and Pharisees: "But all their works they do to be seen of men"; and in that chapter (Matt. 23), Jesus delivers the most withering denunciation of them and their hypocries that could be made; he has not changed his attitude toward hypocrites.

### Praying Secret or Personal Prayers (Verse 6)

There is a difference between personal or secret prayers and public prayers, though the same general regulations cover both. If you are to engage in secret prayer, find a secret place to do your praying. Not only enter into your inner chamber, but shut the door so that no eye can behold you in your personal devotions. A hypocrite would not want to do that; he would want to leave the door open enough that people could see him on his knees. Once it was customary among a certain class of preachers, and may yet be so in places, to come into the meetinghouse after the crowd was well gathered, go up in the pulpit, and before the whole crowd kneel, and engage in secret prayer—a secret prayer in the most public place he could find! That is the sort of thing Jesus here condemns.

### "In Praying Use Not Vain Repetitions" (Verses 7, 8)

Repetitions and vain repetitions are different things. A vain repetition is an empty repetition. The first petition was vain, or the repetition of it would not have been vain. Jesus certainly would not engage in what he himself condemned; yet he prayed the same prayer three times in rapid succession. His praying three times for the same thing in the Garden of Gethsemane was not vain repetition. Moreover, when a person is desperately in earnest about a thing, he will not be content with one petition; and the parable of the widow and the unjust judge shows that Jesus does not intend that we shall be satisfied with one request. (Luke 18: 1-8.) He spoke that parable "to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint"; not to give up in despair. But the heathen thought there was merit in the mere repetition of a list of words. God knows what we need before we ask him, but he may defer an answer to test our earnestness. Besides, the things we ask for may not be the things we need. A child wants many things that would be ruinous to him; a wise parent withholds them. And the things we want would also frequently be ruinous to us. Fortunately for us God knows what we need.

### "After This Manner Therefore Pray Ye" (Verses 9-13)

This is generally referred to as the Lord's prayer, though it is his only in the sense that he is the author of it. There is no indication that he ever used these same words in a prayer; neither did he intend for his disciples to do so. They were to pray "after this manner." If any of the disciples ever used that same prayer, we have no record of it. He mentioned things for which they were to pray.

The first petition was that God's name be hallowed—held in reverence. A man cannot make that petition sincerely, and be accustomed to using the name of God in a light, frivolous way. The

next petition—"Thy kingdom come"—was appropriate before the kingdom was set up. When a man prays for a thing, he hopes for it; but he does not hope for what he already has. So long as they hoped for the coming of the kingdom, they could sincerely pray for it to come; but why should a citizen of the kingdom pray for it to come? If he thinks the kingdom is yet future, he might in his ignorance consistently pray for it to come. "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth." In heaven God's will is done faithfully. A man cannot sincerely make that petition, unless he is willing for God's will to be done in his own heart and life. There must be no rebellion or self-will in the heart of one who so prays. His every thought must be in subjection to the will of God through Christ. In praying for our daily bread, we, as in other matters, are praying for God to do the things which we can in nowise do. In praying for a harvest the farmer is not praying for God to plant the seed, or to cultivate the soil. He is praying for those things over which he has no control, but which are essential to a harvest. The same principle applies in all other things for which we pray. We are not able to return to God what we owe him, and must depend on being forgiven. If a person cannot make amends for the wrongs he has done us, on his repentance we must forgive him, or else not be forgiven. God does not tempt people to sin, but he tries them. We may pray to be kept from these trials, and to be delivered from the evil one.

### **To Be Forgiven, We Must Forgive (Verses 14, 15)**

If a man cannot pay what he owes you, or make amends for the wrong he has done, but comes to you in penitence, asking your forgiveness, what more can he do? You must forgive him, or else never expect God to forgive you. Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven; forgive not, and ye shall not be forgiven. The language of Jesus here cannot be misunderstood.

### **Give Thanks Always (Eph. 5: 20)**

This verse contains only a small part of a sentence. "And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit; speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ." The "all things" refers to all things that God has done or is doing for us. Certainly we are not to thank God for all the things the devil has done and is doing. We can thank anyone for what he does for us, but not for what another does. We should cultivate a deep feeling of thankfulness for all that God has done and is doing for us. That is a natural part of prayer.

### **Rejoice—Pray—Give Thanks (1 Thess. 5: 16-18)**

No one else has so much ground for rejoicing as the child of God. He was under the sentence of death; now he has been delivered. He was without God, and without hope in the world; now he is a child of God, an heir of God, a joint heir with the Lord Jesus Christ. This glorious change in our state was brought about by the heavenly Father through the Lord Jesus Christ. "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice." (Phil. 4: 4.) "Finally, my brethren,

rejoice in the Lord." (Phil. 3: 1.) In Jerusalem, when the Jewish authorities had shamefully persecuted the apostles, they "departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name." (Acts 5: 41.) They did not rejoice because they were persecuted, but because they were counted worthy to suffer persecution.

"Pray without ceasing." This does not mean that there is to be no intervals between prayers, but that we are not to quit praying. Of course we are to be always in what might be termed a prayerful attitude, but a prayerful attitude is not prayer. Even a desire for a thing is not prayer; prayer is desire expressed in words, even though the words be not spoken aloud. When Hannah in the bitterness of her soul prayed for a son, she framed the words by the movement of her lips, but she did not speak aloud. "Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard." (See 1 Sam. 1: 9-13.) Eli saw her lips move, but did not hear any words. Hannah had long desired a son; now she prayed earnestly for one. Paul makes a distinction between desire and prayer: "Brethren, my heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved." (Rom. 10: 1.)

"In everything give thanks." Perhaps there is no situation in which we may find ourselves but that we can find something for which to be thankful. We cannot be thankful that we have sinned, but we can thank God for his mercy in granting pardon to the penitent. Instead therefore of becoming soured and disgruntled, cultivate the habit of looking for something for which you can give thanks. That you rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks, "is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward." It would be worth while to commit these verses to memory.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

When a group of people engage in prayer, it is not supposed that all will speak out, each one making a prayer of his own. One man is selected to lead, the others follow his words so that at the close they can say the "Amen." In that way the group, so to say, signs the prayer. In that way the prayer goes up to God as the united prayer of the whole group. This puts some special obligations on the leader. He must remember that he is not praying his own individual prayer, but is giving expression to the desires of the entire group. He must speak out, so that all can hear his petitions; otherwise he is not leading in prayer.

"Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 18: 19.) Here it is supposed that they agree on what to ask for before they pray. Would it not be a good thing for a group of worshipers to know what they are going to pray for, rather than for some one to lead out in a long rambling prayer that is supposed to be appropriate to all occasions, and is therefore never appropriate to any occasion? Delivering an oration to the Lord, or to the crowd under pretense of praying, is not praying at all.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

- Why we should pray.  
 Jabez and his prayer. (1 Chron. 4: 9, 10.)  
 The Lord's prayer. (John 17.)  
 Secret or personal prayers.  
 Congregational prayers—and how conducted.

## QUESTIONS

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

## Lesson Settings

- Give time, places, and persons.  
 What general principle should govern our religious actions?  
 What request did a disciple make of Jesus concerning prayer?  
 Give some scriptures that encourage praying.

## Verse 5

- What is the significance of the word "stand"?

What does verse 5 really prohibit?

## Verse 6

- What prayer is Jesus regulating in verse 6?  
 What regulation does he give?

## Verses 7, 8

- What is vain repetition?  
 Give an example of repetition.  
 What is the main point in the parable of the widow and the unjust judge?

## Verses 9-13

- What evidence that Jesus did not mean for us to repeat the exact words he gave?  
 Let the class in turn discuss each petition of the prayer.

## Verses 14, 15

- Discuss verses 14, 15

## Eph. 5: 20

- Discuss the sentence of which verse 20 is a part.  
 Discuss the "all things" for which we are to give thanks.

## 1 Thess. 5: 16-18

- What grounds for rejoicing has a child of God?  
 Give other scriptures on rejoicing.  
 What is meant by the injunction to pray without ceasing?  
 What is the difference between desire and prayer?  
 Why should we cultivate a thankful spirit?  
 Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson IX—November 30, 1941

## CHRISTIAN LOVE

John 13: 34, 35; 1 Cor. 13: 1-13

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.

1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal.

2 And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

3 And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing.

4 Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil;

6 Rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth;

7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

8 Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away.

9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part;

10 But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.

11 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.

12 For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known.

13 But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“We love, because he first loved us.” (1 John 4: 19.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 145: 9-21.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|              |    |       |   |
|--------------|----|-------|---|
| November 24. | M. | ..... | The Great Commandment (Matt. 22: 35-40) |
| November 25. | T. | ..... | Love Supreme (1 Cor. 13: 1-13)          |
| November 26. | W. | ..... | God Is Love (1 John 4: 7-16)            |
| November 27. | T. | ..... | The Love of Christ (Eph. 3: 14-21)      |
| November 28. | F. | ..... | Christian Love (Rom. 13: 8-10)          |
| November 29. | S. | ..... | Love Ministering (John 21: 12-17)       |
| November 30. | S. | ..... | Love and Life Eternal (Matt. 19: 16-22) |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—For John 13: 34, 35, A.D. 30 or 31; for First Corinthians about A.D. 57.

*Places.*—The words of John 13: 34, 35 were spoken in Jerusalem; the first letter to the Corinthians was written at Ephesus.

*Persons.*—Jesus, his disciples, Paul, and the brethren at Corinth.

*Lesson Links.*—In the life and death of Jesus he really taught the world what love is, and how to love. That is the significance of our Golden Text. We love, because he first loved. And yet there are some things that we must not love. We must not love evil, nor false doctrine. We must not love the world. “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” (1 John 2: 15.)

We must love God with all our powers and resources, and that means that we must also love his word and his church. We cannot love him, and speak lightly of either. If we disobey his word, or neglect his church, we do not love him. In these things it is easy for a person to deceive himself.

But love is not a mere sentiment; it is practical and helpful. And yet true love is not selfish; it is not like the love the wolf has for the lamb. And if we love God, we want to do the things that are pleasing to him. It is therefore always easy to test our love.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### A New Commandment (Verses 34, 35)

In what sense was this commandment new, which Jesus here gave? In the law of Moses we have the commandment: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” (Lev. 19: 18.) Jesus had repeated this command of the law. (Matt. 19: 19.) The commandment Jesus gave was not new in the sense that they were to love one another, but its newness is seen in this added statement; “Even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” He loved them better than he loved himself, for he was to give his life for them. His life for them was the highest possible type of love. Soon he was to die for them. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15: 13.) That is the highest type

of love that any man can show, or, rather, will show; but the love of Jesus went even beyond that—he died for his enemies. But Jesus does not here demand that we love our enemies as he loved them, but that we love one another as he loved us. "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.)

To lay down our lives for other disciples of Christ, as he laid down his life for us, identifies us as his disciples. Badges, emblems, a certain mannerism, or some other means of identifying each other, are adopted by certain orders or clans; but a disciple of Christ is not to be known by any badges or peculiarity of dress. They are to be known by their love for one another. Even the heathen took note of this trait in the early disciples. How careful churches should be to keep down any internal party strife; for when party strife comes in, love goes out. Anything but love then prevails. "But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. This wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed." That is God's picture of a church torn by party strife.

### Love Greater Than Spiritual Gifts (1 Cor. 13: 1-3)

The thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians is a continuation of Paul's discussion of spiritual gifts. At least some of these gifts are mentioned in chapter twelve, verses 4-11. Different gifts were distributed to different members of the church for the benefit of the whole church. "But all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will." Even though the church was plentifully supplied with these spiritual gifts, it was in a state of confusion and partyism. (1 Cor. 1: 10-15.) It was right for them to desire these spiritual gifts, yet in their strife they were missing the main thing. Paul now proceeds to show them a more excellent way. (1 Cor. 12: 31.)

It has always been considered quite an accomplishment for a man to be able to speak fluently several languages—no one can speak all the languages and dialects. If he could he would be famous. Just what the language of angels is we do not know. Perhaps Paul got some idea of that when he was caught up into Paradise, and heard words that he could not utter. (2 Cor. 12: 1-4.) In verses 1-3 Paul uses the pronoun *I* in a general sense—what was true of him would be true of anyone else. If a man could speak all the languages of earth and heaven, he would be a wonder in the eyes of men; but if he did not have love, he would be as worthless as the sound of brass horns and clanging cymbals. He would be just a noise in the world.

God's prophets spoke for him—through them he made known things. They could explain the significance of types and symbols of the Old Testament, teach present truth, and reveal future events. If a man could do all these things, and more, he would be nothing—worth nothing, if he had not love.

"If I bestow all my goods to feed the poor." We are told that the Greek signifies, "If I dole out my goods, etc." If a man gave small amounts to each needy person, he could benefit more people. This would gain him wider praise. It is said that some wealthy people in those days did that sort of thing. A man might give all

he had for show; and through stubbornness or fanaticism he might give his body to be burned as a martyr. Without love such sacrifices profit nothing.

### What Love Does (Verses 4-7)

Paul does not here undertake to tell what love is; he is content with telling what it does. He speaks of our love toward one another rather than our love to God. In the midst of so much confusion and strife as there was at Corinth, the brethren could not love one another as they should. This lesson was given them to show them that they were leaving off the main thing that makes Christian character.

"Love suffereth long." Love puts up with a lot of things that are not pleasant. It does not become bitter when wrongs are done. It seeks to save instead of to destroy. It endures patiently under trying circumstances. "And is kind." Love seeks to help, and not to harm. And yet, as has been said, love looks to the ultimate good of the object loved. A severe rebuke is sometimes the kindest thing that can be done for another. Love looks to the future happiness as well as to the present. To do that which brings to people the greatest good and the greatest happiness is genuine love. It therefore makes a person considerate of others. "Love envieth not." Instead of being envious because another is prosperous, or talented, or well situated in life, love rejoices with him. If "one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it." (1 Cor. 12: 26.)

"Love vaunteth not itself." Love does not boast; love does not brag. It does not envy what others do, nor brag about what it does. It does not assume an air of superiority over others. It behaves aright toward others, no matter what may be their circumstances in life. It does not flaunt its piety in the face of others, nor boast of its knowledge or good works. And hence, it "doth not behave itself unseemly." Because love does not vaunt itself, and is not puffed up, its behavior toward all people is above reproach. Love is lacking when a professed Christian feels that he is too important and too dignified to do the most humble service for the ignorant, the poor, and the lowly. Such a one should remember that Jesus set an example of lowly service when he washed the disciples' feet. "Seeketh not its own." Love is unselfish. It does not seek its own pleasure or profit at the expense of others. It does not try to use people for its own pleasure and profit. It serves others, but does not use them. "Is not provoked, taketh not account of evil." These statements, like "Seeketh not its own," must be taken with some limitations. Translators and commentators have had difficulty in determining the exact import of the Greek text. Macknight gives this translation: "Is not exasperated: doth not imagine evil." Perhaps the Common Version presents the correct idea—"not easily provoked." Jehovah is long-suffering and is not easily provoked to anger; yet on numerous occasions his people have provoked him by their rebelliousness. (See 1 Kings 14: 9; 16: 2, and many other passages.) Love does not become provoked at every fancied wrong, nor at every little wrong that is done. It does not imagine evil where perhaps there is none. Some people put things together and imagine evil was intended when there was nothing of the sort. It is not the part of love to try to make evil out of the actions of others when no evil was intended, nor is it good for the person himself. Love is not suspicious.

Love finds no pleasure in unrighteousness; does not rejoice even when a bitter opponent loses influence by doing evil. Wicked men frequently rejoice when they learn that some outstanding Christian, and especially a prominent preacher, falls into sin, or even is accused of sin. Love never rejoices in sin, no matter who may be guilty. It rejoices with the truth—with those who have the truth and practice it. Truth in one's own heart and life and truth in the heart and lives of others should always be a cause for joy. It bears the burdens of life without complaint, and believes all that God has said. Of course, we are not to believe every slander and false report we hear. In all things, in all conditions, love hopes; it never despairs. And it endures all unavoidable things, and does not give up. In all relations of life it is durable and dependable.

### **"Love Never Faileth" (Verses 8-10)**

Love is dependable—it does not fail. It sustains in many trials and temptations. When prophecies, tongues, and supernatural knowledge serve their purposes, they pass away. All things, material and spiritual, are laid aside when they serve their purposes; but love will still be serving its purpose in the world to come.

The apostles did not know the full will of God right at the beginning of their inspiration. Revelation was made only as they needed it—some one day and some another. To one was revealed a part and to another a part. All of that ceased when the full revelation was completed. We have the results of their inspiration. Since the perfect will of God has been revealed, there would now be nothing for an inspired man to reveal. That which is perfect has come; hence, that which was in part has been done away.

### **"But Now Abideth Faith, Hope, Love" (Verses 11-13)**

Paul compares the progress of revelation to his growth from childhood. People could not take in the whole of God's will at once. Even the fact that the law of Moses ended at the cross was not immediately made known. Truth came by degrees, just as a child grows. Revelation therefore grew; but when it was full grown, when it was completed, that growth ceased. And just here it seems that Paul (verse 12) compares the then incomplete state of revelation with the future state. God's will concerning the present life has now been fully revealed; but even so, there are some things that we will not fully know till we reach the other shore. It is thought by some competent authorities that the word "mirror" does not correctly represent the Greek word. The ancients had not clear glass for their windows, as we have today; and so, in looking through what they did have, they saw things darkly. Or as the marginal reading has it, "Greek, *in a riddle*." They could get some idea of an object without, but could not see it clearly. Now that does not have reference to the things God has revealed for us to do, but to the dim outline of what the future holds for us. In the future world we will come face to face with the realities there, and shall know even as we are known. John did not know just what we will be. "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is." (1 John 3: 2.)

The fact that faith, hope, and love abide, shows that the spiritual gifts he had mentioned, and which the Corinthians prized so highly, would cease while "these three" still remained. These are the permanent things of the religion of Christ—things, too, which all, the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, may possess and exercise to the fullest measure.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

The commands to love one another, to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to love even our enemies, seem impossible to some people. This trouble grows out of our associating personal attachment or affection with love. This is not required in the commands just mentioned. Here the Greek language had the advantage of having different words to express different kinds of love. Two of these words are prominent in the New Testament, the verb forms of which are *phileo* and *agapao*. And in reference to these two words a mistake is often made in saying that *agapao* is stronger than *phileo*; whereas the difference is in the kind of love, and not in the degree of love. *Phileo* has to do with personal attachment, or affection, growing out of association or natural relationships. It is not used in the commands to love the brethren, to love one's neighbor, or to love God. *Agapao* is used in such commands; it does not necessarily imply personal affections.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The blessings God's love for man brought.  
What man's love toward God leads him to do.  
What love of the brethren requires.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
What is the significance of our Golden Text?

What are we not to love?  
What is included in love toward God?

#### Verses 34, 35

In what sense was this command new?  
Discuss these two verses.

#### 1 Cor. 13: 1-3

What matter was Paul discussing?

Give his illustrations as to the importance of love.

#### Verses 4-7

Let the students in turn discuss each thing that love is, or does.

#### Verses 8-10

Give the meaning of verse 8.  
What is meant by verse 9?  
Discuss verse 10.

#### Verses 11-13

Give as full discussion of these verses as possible.  
Repeat verse 13.  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson X—December 7, 1941

## THE NATURE AND WORK OF THE CHURCH

Acts 2: 41-47; Eph. 4: 11-16

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

42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

45 And they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need.

46 And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart.

47 Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved.

11 And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

14 That we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error;

15 But speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ:

16 From whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it.” (Eph. 5: 25.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rev. 21: 9-18.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|             |    |   |
|-------------|----|---|
| December 1. | M. | The Church Winning Souls (Acts 2: 41-47)          |
| December 2. | T. | Unity and Diversity in the Church (Eph. 4: 11-16) |
| December 3. | W. | Christ's Church (Matt. 16: 13-20)                 |
| December 4. | T. | The Body of Christ (Eph. 1: 15-23)                |
| December 5. | F. | The Minister of the Church (Acts 20: 26-35)       |
| December 6. | S. | Members of the Church (1 Cor. 12: 12-27)          |
| December 7. | S. | Christ the Cornerstone (1 Pet. 2: 6-10)           |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—For Acts 2: 41-47, A.D. 31; for Eph. 4: 11-16, dates given by different authors vary from A.D. 61 to 65.

*Places.*—Jerusalem and Rome.

*Persons.*—The apostles and the other members of the church at Jerusalem, Paul and the Ephesian brethren.

*Lesson Links.*—The importance of the church will be seen by reading what is said about it in the New Testament. The following are a few of the many things the Lord says about his church: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or

any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5: 25-27.) "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20: 28.) Christ would not give himself up—shed his blood—for that which does not amount to anything. Paul addressed a letter to the church of God at Corinth, in which he said, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof." (1 Cor. 12: 27.) "And he is the head of the body, the church." (Col. 1: 18.) Jesus would not claim a body that did not amount to anything, nor would he be the head of a worthless body.

The meaning of the Greek word translated *church* is, *the called out*. The Greeks applied it to any group of people called together for any purpose. In the New Testament it is applied to the people of God because they have been called out of sin into holiness of life—called out of Satan's kingdom—the kingdom of darkness—into the kingdom of Christ. When a man has been called out of sin into the service of God, he is then in the church, a part of the *called out*. This change is called being born again; such a one is a child of God, a saved man. The church is the house of God, that is, the family of God. (1 Tim. 3: 14, 15.) The process that makes one a child of God makes him a member of God's family, the church. People enter the kingdom of God—the family of God, the church—by being born again. A person is not therefore saved, and then added to the church; nor does the saved man join the church. The process by which a man is saved adds him to the church—it is all one and the same process.

The church of God is the kingdom of God. It is true that the words *church* and *kingdom* are not synonymous terms, but they are applied to the same body of people. The terms *citizen* and *president* are not synonymous terms, but they are applied to the same individual. The word *church* sometimes refers to all the saved in the world, and sometimes to a local congregation. That is apparent to any thoughtful reader.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### The Saved Continued in the Apostles' Teaching (Verses 41, 42)

"They then that received his word were baptized." They did not delay. It shows that when a person receives the word of God, he is baptized without delay. Why are not people baptized? Because they do not receive the word of God. To refuse to be baptized is to reject the word of God. It was so even under John's baptism. "And all the people when they heard, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him." (Luke 7: 29, 30.) The Pharisees and the lawyers not only rejected the counsel of God in refusing to be baptized, but they really declared by their actions that God was unjust in demanding that they be baptized. And so it is today. But three thousand submitted to the counsel of God at the close of Peter's sermon. In being baptized they were added to the number of the saved. They were glad that a way was opened up through which they could get

rid of their sins. They had come to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and had learned what to do to be saved, but how to live the new life they knew not.

Doubtless many of those who were baptized had come from distant lands to attend the Feast of Pentecost. It would be necessary for these to remain in Jerusalem sufficient time for the apostles to teach them their duties as Christians and for them to become well grounded in the doctrine of Christ. Properly taught and trained, they could teach others when they returned home. Hence "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching." This does not refer to what they were practicing, but to what they were learning. Hackett gives this rendering: "Constantly applying themselves unto the teaching of the apostles." What they did in obedience to this teaching is told in the rest of the sentence. For a time that church was a great school. The apostles were the teachers, and there were several thousand under their teaching. Every church today should be a school, in which all the members are so thoroughly taught and trained that they know how to carry on the work wherever they go.

They continued in fellowship, or partnership in the work. This word sometimes refers to contributions to the needy, because in giving to the needy we are having part in relieving his poverty; we have fellowship with him in his needs. (2 Cor. 8: 4; 9: 13.) And the verses that follow show that there was much of this sort of fellowship in that church. As the breaking of bread is mentioned here in connection with other acts of worship, it must refer to the Lord's Supper. (See Acts 20: 7.) In this, as in the other matters mentioned, they continued steadfastly. The Lord's Supper with them was not a haphazard affair, to be attended to when the church saw fit. They could not have continued steadfastly in the breaking of bread in such an irregular way. "And the prayers." It was fortunate for the early church, that they were not hampered by a lot of speculations as to whether God answered prayers. They believed that he could, and that he did, answer prayers. Therefore they continued in the prayers.

### **The Church Had Favor with the People (Verses 43-47)**

The fear here mentioned was perhaps excited by the wonders and signs which were done through the apostles. The people were struck with awe at such wonderful demonstrations of power. These wonders and signs showed the people that God was working through the apostles, and that therefore the apostles were God's agents, or instruments.

Some confusion has arisen over their having all things common. It was not a communistic affair. Some had possessions, and others had need. Had they pooled their possessions in a common fund, none would have had possessions and none would have had need. It will be noticed that distribution was made to those who had need, and not to all the members. (Read also Acts 4: 32-37; 5: 1-11; 6: 1-3.) They did not count what they had as their own; as the need arose property was sold to meet that need. Everything was devoted to the common good, and yet Peter's language to Ananias shows that no one was compelled to sell what he had. But there was an emergency; those from a distance had no means of support; those who could help them stay till they were sufficiently taught, did so freely.

For a time there was no hindrance to their meeting every day in the temple. With them it was a time of gladness. Their conduct gave them favor with all the people. But that did not last. It seems that the resurrection of Christ, the events of Pentecost, the wonderful success of the first day's preaching, together with the wonders and signs which were done through the apostles, had the leaders in Jerusalem so puzzled for a time that they did not know what to do. It took them some time to recover from the shock, and organize for a determined persecution. The favor with which the people regarded the church must have held them in check. Daily additions were made to the church. The marginal reading—those that *were being saved*—seems preferable to what the translators put in the text. It harmonizes with the general teaching as to how people enter into the body of Christ. In the act of being saved they became members of the church, members of the body of Christ. In those days there was no such notion as being saved, and then joining some church; for in being saved people became members of the church. In those days there were no denominations for people to join.

### Gifts to the Church (Eph. 4: 11)

As verses 9 and 10 are parenthetical, the verses of our lesson connect directly with verse 8: "When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." Verses 9 and 10 show that the one here spoken of is the Lord Jesus Christ. When he ascended to the Father he gave gifts unto men. What were the gifts? It will be noticed that the American Standard Version has to be in Italics, which shows that they supplied the words to fill out what they conceived to be the meaning of the Greek. In Adam Clarke's Commentary, as condensed by Daniel Curry, this supplemental statement is made: "No equivalent for the word 'some' is found in the original, and its use here is uncalled for and misleading. The statement is, that the ascended and enthroned Head of the Church has given 'apostles,' etc., for the purposes afterwards named." The gifts therefore were "the apostles, and the prophets, and the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers." (Compare this with 1 Cor. 12: 28.) The apostles were the first in rank, the highest in importance. Through them was to be made the complete revelation of the will of God through Christ; they were the ambassadors of Christ. Prophets could correctly teach the will of God, and when necessary foretell future events, for a prophet spoke for God. Evangelists were third in rank of the gifts here mentioned. It was their duty to preach to both saint and sinner. Pastors were shepherds—the same word here translated pastors is elsewhere translated shepherds. They were the elders of the churches. Even in churches where there was no one sufficiently developed to be shepherds, or elders, there was need of teaching. These infant churches would need men sufficiently inspired to teach correctly. It seems that each of the higher gifts included all under it, but the lower did not include the higher. To illustrate—the apostles were also prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers; and so with the others till we reach the teachers—teachers were simply teachers.

### The Purposes of These Gifts (Verses 12-14)

Saints are Christians, the children of God. No man in this life is perfect in the sense that he is entirely free of faults; but he can have

a perfect system of religion revealed to him, for which purpose these gifts were made. A man can be sufficiently perfected that he is sufficient for ministering, or serving. And these gifts were made in order to build up the body of Christ, which is his church. He is "head over all things to the church, which is his body." (Eph. 1: 22.) The church may be builded up in two ways; namely, by adding new members, and by edifying the members. (1 Cor. 3: 10-15; Rom. 14: 19.) And these gifts—these miraculously endowed men—were to continue "till we all attain unto the unity of the faith," etc. "The faith" is the system of salvation, the gospel. "The unity" does not refer to the unity—the oneness—of believers, but to the oneness—the full completeness—of the faith. It was not all revealed at one time, but in parts. When all the revelations made through these endowed men were brought together, there should be oneness, or unity, of knowledge. "Unto a fullgrown man." This reminds one of Paul's illustrating the growth of revelation by the growth of a child to manhood. (1 Cor. 13: 9-11.) This idea of growth is carried out also in verse 14. Without a complete revelation they were more or less like children, and in danger of being tossed to and fro by every shrewd schemer who came along with perverse teaching. There would be no excuse for being thus led astray after the will of God was fully revealed. People are led astray now because they will not study that will and believe its plain teaching. They are led astray without excuse.

### Speaking the Truth in Love (Verses 15, 16)

The teacher should preach the truth in the love of the truth. If the teacher or preacher really loves the truth he will not teach anything else. Christian growth can come only through the truth. Christ is the head of the church, and of the individual Christian; and we certainly cannot grow up into him by teaching and practicing falsehood. The whole body must be knit together in him. If the whole body works together, as do the members of the human body, the body, the church, will increase in numbers and build itself up in love.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

The church is in the world, but not of the world. "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John 15: 19.) "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (John 17: 16.) The Christian should never lose sight of the fact that he has been called out of the world into the fellowship of Christ.

The work of the church may be summed up under three heads: (1) Converting sinners. In fact, this might be called the main business of the church. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost, and he set us an example. The Christian or the church that is not interested in saving the lost has not the spirit of Christ. The next work is but a carrying to completion the first work mentioned. (2) Edifying the members. That is stressed in the verses we have just studied in Ephesians. (3) Helping the needy. The student can easily find the references setting forth these activities of the church. If an individual member of the church does a good deed, it is really the church at work.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

What is the church?

The church as a missionary society.

The church as an institution to edify its members.

The benevolent work of the church.

## QUESTIONS

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

## Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Give some scriptures showing the importance of the church.  
Give the significance of the word translated church.  
How did people become members of the church?

## Verses 41, 42

Discuss the events leading up to our lesson.  
What does a refusal to be baptized amount to?  
Discuss each item in verse 42.

## Verses 43-47

What were the purposes of the wonders and signs and how did they affect people?

Discuss their management of their property.  
How are people added to the church?

## Eph. 4: 11

What gifts were given to men?  
Which was first in rank? which last?  
Discuss each one mentioned.

## Verses 12-14

What are saints?  
What were the purposes of the gifts mentioned?  
These gifts were to continue till when?  
Discuss verses 13, 14.

## Verses 15, 16

What is meant by speaking the truth in love—in love of what?  
Discuss verse 16.  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson XI—December 14, 1941

## CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

2 Cor. 8: 1-9; 9: 6, 7

1 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Măc-ě-dŏ'nĭ-á;

2 How that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

3 For according to their power, I bear witness, yea and beyond their power, they gave of their own accord,

4 Beseeching us with much entreaty in regard of this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the saints:

5 And this, not as we had hoped, but first they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us through the will of God.

6 Inasmuch that we exhorted Tĭ'tŭs, that as he had made a beginning before, so he would also complete in you this grace also.

7 But as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all earnestness, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

8 I speak not by way of commandment, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity also of your love.

9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jē'sŭs Chrĭst, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich.

6 But this I say, He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

7 Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” (1 Cor. 4: 2.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 92: 1-5, 12-15.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|              |    |  |
|--------------|----|--|
| December 8.  | M. | The Grace of Stewardship (2 Cor. 8: 1-9)       |
| December 9.  | T. | A Spiritual Enrichment (2 Cor. 9: 6-15)        |
| December 10. | W. | Principles of Stewardship (1 Cor. 4: 1-7)      |
| December 11. | T. | Stewardship a Trust (Matt. 25: 14-30)          |
| December 12. | F. | Stewardship and Philanthropy (Matt. 25: 31-40) |
| December 13. | S. | True Riches (Luke 16: 9-13)                    |
| December 14. | S. | Faithful Stewardship Rewarded (Mark 10: 23-31) |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—The second Corinthian letter was written within a short time after the first letter was written, A.D. 57 or 58.

*Place.*—Macedonia.

*Persons.*—Paul and the saints at Corinth.

*Lesson Links.*—Primarily a steward was one who had charge of household affairs. This application of the term is seen in Luke 12: 42: “And the Lord said, Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall set over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?” The next verses show that if he were faithful in this lower service, his lord would make him manager of all his affairs. Apparently the steward in the parable recorded in Luke 16: 1-13 was the business manager for his lord. Our Golden Text states a fundamental requirement concerning a steward.

The apostles were called stewards of God because to them the work of distributing the gospel was committed. They were accountable only to God for the manner in which they discharged that service. After stating what was required of stewards, Paul said, “But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.” (1 Cor. 4: 2, 3.)

But in regard to material things, we all, both saint and sinner, have in our care property that belongs to God, whether it be much or little. “The earth is Jehovah’s, and the fulness thereof.” (Psalm 24: 1.) What we have therefore is not really our own. “And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another’s, who will give you that which is your own?” (Luke 16: 12.) The Lord—the owner of it all—will therefore hold us responsible for the use we make of that which has been entrusted to us.

It seems that the poor saints in Judea were in distress through a considerable period of time. A famine in Palestine was only partly responsible for their great need. When Paul became a disciple of Christ, he suffered the loss of all material possessions. “For whom I suffered the loss of all things.” The Jewish authorities evidently confiscated all his possessions. That sort of persecution was not confined to Paul; the other disciples in Judea finally suffered the same kind of persecutions. We find this revealing statement in Hebrews, a letter written to these disciples in Judea: “For ye both had compassion on them that were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions, knowing that ye have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one.” (Heb. 10: 34.) They had therefore been stripped of their property; and when a famine came

in the land, they were in great need. And in raising funds for them among the Gentile churches, it seems that Paul had two good objects in view; he would assist in relieving their deep poverty and suffering, and also by that means lead them to be more favorable to him and his work among the Gentiles. On account of so much opposition to him in Jerusalem, he feared that the brethren there would not accept the relief he was bringing them. (Rom. 15: 30-32.)

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Liberality of the Churches of Macedonia (Verses 1-5)

Paul was zealous in giving assistance to the poor. (Gal. 2: 9, 10.) In his first letter to the church of God at Corinth he said, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come. And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem: and if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me." (1 Cor. 16: 1-4.) Hence, we see that the churches of Macedonia, the churches of Achaia, the churches of Galatia, and perhaps others, were making contributions for the poor saints in Judea. Paul was making a great effort to stir the churches up to make liberal contributions for these poor saints. He had been working to this end for months when he wrote his second letter to Corinth. In fact, a year before he wrote this second letter Corinth had promised a donation. "For I know your readiness, of which I glory on your behalf to them of Macedonia, that Achaia hath been prepared for a year past; and your zeal hath stirred up very many of them." (2 Cor. 9: 2.)

Paul uses the zeal of one church as a means of stirring up zeal in other churches. "We make known to you the grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Macedonia." Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea were in Macedonia. God's grace, or favor, to these brethren had stirred up in them a benevolent spirit. In fact, it was God's grace working through them. "Much proof of affliction." Their afflictions had been a test, a trial, and had proved their faithfulness. They had suffered much from their countrymen, perhaps even to the spoiling of their goods. (1 Thess 2: 14.) It is likely that the other churches of Macedonia suffered as did Thessalonica. The activities of the church at Thessalonica had been an example to other churches. (1 Thess. 1: 6-8.) Philippi had always been active in assisting Paul in preaching the gospel in other places. (Phil. 4: 10-18.) Now they were coming forward promptly with help for the poor saints in Judea. "The abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality." In view of the liberality of these churches the contributions of most of the churches are shamefully little.

"Beyond their power, they gave of their own accord." They did more than, in justice to themselves, they were able to do; at least, that seems to be the import of Paul's language. Their liberality exceeded any reasonable expectation. It seems that Paul thought they were giving more than they should give—"beseeching us with much entreaty in regard of this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the saints." Apparently Paul had objected to their giving so

much for the poor saints, and had accepted it only because of their "much entreaty." Paul had not even hoped for them to make such a liberal donation; but when people give themselves to the Lord, they realize that all they have belongs to him. They know that they are not their own, and that therefore what they have in their possession is not their own; all belongs to the Lord. It would be a great thing, if everyone realized that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; people would be more liberal in the use of their means in every good work. "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.)

### **"See That Ye Abound in This Grace Also" (Verses 6, 7)**

Titus was one of Paul's helpers. Apparently at Paul's suggestion, he had sometime before this begun the work of stirring up the Corinthian brethren to make a contribution to the poor saints in Jerusalem and Judea. At the time this letter was written Titus had been again sent to Corinth; this time he was sent to complete the work which had been in progress for at least a year. Corinth was a rich and prosperous city, and it is reasonable to suppose that the saints there were more prosperous than were the saints in Macedonia. It was in their power to do much for the poor saints; but they, like most other disciples, needed to have their minds stirred up and their attention directed to this worthy object. Many churches fail to do what they could do because no one stirs up their zeal; and the zeal of many, once it is stirred up, grows lukewarm because no one directs their powers toward a good work. Christians need to have a worthy object before them, and then they need somebody to stir them to action and to direct their efforts. And yet there are exceptions; some Christians have sufficient zeal and initiative to do much work of their own accord. However united effort needs direction.

The church at Corinth was highly endowed with spiritual gifts. They came behind in no gift. (1 Cor. 1: 7.) "But as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all earnestness, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also." As they abounded in so many things, Paul exhorts them to see to it that they abounded in this grace of giving to help the poor. Grace is favor—a benefit bestowed; and a liberal contribution would certainly be a benefit to these poor saints in Judea.

### **Proving the Sincerity of Love (Verse 8)**

Love may be sincere or only pretended. Pretended love will not stand a severe test. The strength and sincerity of love is measured by what a person is willing to do or sacrifice for the one he professes to love; and also for the cause he professes to love. The church at Corinth professed to love God and his children. Were they sincere in that profession of love? The liberality of the churches in Macedonia proved the sincerity of their love; they did not love in word only. Paul used them as a standard by which to measure the love of the brethren at Corinth. If the saints in Macedonia out of their deep poverty gave so liberally, prosperous Corinth should do much more. "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.)

### Christ Jesus Set an Example (Verse 9)

Certainly no selfish motive moved Christ Jesus to leave the glories and the riches of heaven to come to earth, take upon himself the nature of man, and die as a criminal. He loved man, and showed his love by what he did. "Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." (1 John 4: 9-11.) Christ Jesus is our example. Paul refers to his love as a means of stirring the Corinthian brethren to action. If they loved as Jesus loved, they would do what they could to save their brethren from suffering. And we are under as much obligation to relieve suffering as were these early Christians.

### Sowing and Reaping (2 Cor. 9: 6)

There are two fundamental truths that govern sowing and reaping. (1) The kind of harvest we reap depends on the kind of grain we sow. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." We sow to the flesh by spending our money for luxuries and pleasures—that brings a harvest of corruption. We sow to the spirit by using our means in the service of God—that brings life everlasting. (2) We cannot sow sparingly and reap an abundant harvest. Paul uses this well-known truth in agriculture to impress upon the saints of Corinth their duty of giving liberally. That which was true of these matters then is true now. We reap what we sow, and we reap according to our sowing.

### "God Loveth a Cheerful Giver" (Verse 7)

No man has authority to tell another what he must give. If a man were forced to give, such giving would be of no spiritual value to him; for giving of our means, like all other acts of obedience, must come from the heart. However most people need teaching and exhortation concerning their duty to give. Each one must give as he purposes in his own heart; but this purpose should be formed with an earnest desire to do all that God would have him do. "God is not mocked." No one can deceive him; he knows what you should give. We should not give grudgingly, or of sorrow. When Jesus said, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak," he uttered a truth of wide application. A sense of duty may make the spirit willing to perform a duty, even though the flesh draws back. The spirit can triumph over the flesh, and lead one to perform a task cheerfully even though the flesh is weak. As God loves a cheerful giver, what must be his attitude toward one who does not give at all; or if he gives, gives grudgingly?

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Give for the good you may do by giving, and not for the purpose of buying up public favor. God does not reward the one who gives to be seen of men.

In giving as we should, we are laying up treasures in heaven. Think of it in this light, and you can understand what Jesus meant when he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Read carefully 1 Cor. 16: 2, and notice the questions it answers. *When give?* "Upon the first day of the week." This is the regular contribution; but we should give any day in the week, if we find any who need help. *Who should give?* "Each one of you." No reward comes to a person simply because he is a member of a church that gives liberally, unless he has a part in that liberality. *How much should one give?* "As he may prosper." Of course, if a person has absolutely no income, and must depend on others to feed and clothe him, he has nothing to give. We should remember the widow who cast into the treasury all her living. In giving her pitiful sum, she gave more than all the wealthy people, for she gave all she had. God measures the gift, not by the amount given, but by the amount you have left after you give. No man gives the widow's mite unless he gives all his living.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

How much Jesus gave.

How much Paul gave.

The liberality of the Jerusalem church.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive."

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
What were the duties of a steward?  
Why were the apostles called stewards of God?  
What of us and our property?  
Why were collections raised for the saints in Judea?  
Why would a famine be so severe on these saints in Judea?

#### Verses 1-5

What was Paul's attitude toward the poor?  
Discuss 1 Cor. 16: 1-4.  
How did Paul seek to stir up the zeal of the Corinthians?  
What is said of the churches of Macedonia?

#### Verses 6, 7

Tell of the work of Titus in this matter of collecting for the saints. Why do churches sometimes fail to give liberally?  
Discuss verse 7.

#### Verse 8

Discuss verse 8; also 1 John 4: 9-11.

#### Verse 9

Discuss verse 9.

#### 2 Cor. 9: 6

Name and discuss two fundamental truths concerning sowing and reaping.

#### Verse 7

Discuss verse 7.  
Discuss the reflections.

### Lesson XII—December 21, 1941

## THE COMING OF GOD'S SON

Isa. 9: 6, 7; John 1: 1-4, 10-14; 1 John 4: 9-11

6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jê-hô'vâh of hosts will perform this.

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name:

13 Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.

9 Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him.

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“The Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.” (1 John 4: 14.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Luke 2: 8-20.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|              |    |  |
|--------------|----|--|
| December 15. | M. | Christ Seen from Afar (Isa. 9: 1-7)                |
| December 16. | T. | The Word Became Flesh (John 1: 1-18)               |
| December 17. | W. | God Our Savior (John 3: 13-21)                     |
| December 18. | T. | Christ Our Redeemer (1 John 5: 1-10)               |
| December 19. | F. | The Eternal Sacrifice (Heb. 10: 5-17)              |
| December 20. | S. | The Alpha and Omega (Rev. 21: 1-7)                 |
| December 21. | S. | Jesus' Birth Announced to Shepherds (Luke 2: 8-14) |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Isaiah prophesied between the years 760 and 700 B.C. The date of John's writing is not known; it was probably near the close of his life, or about A.D. 96.

*Places.*—Isaiah prophesied in Jerusalem; John probably wrote at Ephesus.

*Persons.*—The prophet Isaiah and the apostle John.

*Lesson Links.*—“Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” (1 Tim. 1: 15.) The world was lost in sin. Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost. “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.” (John 8: 24.)

Long before Jesus came into the world his coming had been foretold in promise and prophecy. To Abraham God said, “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” (Gen. 22: 18.) This promise was renewed to Isaac and to Jacob. (Gen. 26: 4; 28: 14.) This promise did not mean, as the Jews thought it meant, that God would bless the world through the ministrations of national Israel. Paul's language leaves no doubt as to its application: “Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” (Gal. 3: 16.) Hence, the seed through which the world would be blessed was Christ.

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. . . . 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.) Stephen's speech before the Sanhedrin shows plainly that Christ was the one foretold in the foregoing quotation. God purposed to sum up all things in Christ—he is the center of all of God's plans and purposes concerning man's redemption. (Eph. 1: 9, 10.)

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Some Descriptive Names of Christ Jesus (Verse 6)

"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." Prophecy often speaks of coming events as if they had already arrived. This is especially true when the fulfillment of the prophecy depends on no conditions to be performed by man.

Jesus came into the world because the world needed him. All the relations that Christ Jesus now sustains to man grew out of man's needs, and the names he bears are descriptive of these relationships. Many names not given in our text are applied to him; a study of them is very profitable. In our text we have *Wonderful, Counsellor*. In the marginal reading we have *Wonderful Counsellor*. We need counsel; we have never traveled this way before, and also new problems face us at every turn. Jesus is our *Wonderful Counsellor*, for his counsel is always correct. Men sometimes give foolish counsel, and sometimes they give counsel from a selfish motive. The counsel of this Son is always wise and unselfish. His sole purpose in giving counsel is to benefit man. It is a cause of thankfulness that the government is upon the shoulders of this *Wonderful Counsellor*. "Mighty God." There are three persons in the Godhead, and each one is sometimes referred to as God. When this Son came to the earth he was called "Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us." (Matt. 1: 23.) He was God manifested in the flesh. He is *Mighty God*, for all authority in heaven and on the earth was given to him. (Matt. 28: 18.) "Everlasting Father." Finite mind cannot comprehend the Infinite; we cannot comprehend the relations that exist between the three persons of the Godhead. Jesus said, "If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: . . . He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; . . . Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" (John 14: 7-10.) "Prince of Peace." In Jesus all racial antagonisms are destroyed. The law of Moses was a separating wall between Jews and Gentiles, a source of enmity between them. This wall Jesus took out of the way—abolished it, that both Jew and Gentile might be brought together in peace in one body. "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." (Eph. 2: 14-16.) Jesus came to make peace between God and man—to reconcile man to God; and of course all who are at peace with God are at peace with one another. There can be no enmity between men who are at peace with God.

Though Christ Jesus is the Prince of Peace, his peace is not a peace at any price. He will not compromise with the devil, nor seek to appease him, in order to be at peace with him. There can be no peace where the devil reigns. Peace is established when the devil is driven out of the hearts and the lives of men; till then there is war. "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword." (Matt. 10: 34.) This sword is the sword of the Spirit, the word of God. His servants constitute his army—through them he fights. Hence, Paul to Timothy: "Fight the good fight of the faith." We are to fight sin that peace may reign.

### The Son Upon the Throne of David (Verse 7)

The government of the Son would have a small beginning. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12: 32.) The kingdom would be given to his flock while it was little. This cannot refer to the time when he comes again, for then his flock shall have increased so man cannot number it. (Rev. 7: 9.) There would therefore be a great increase of his kingdom. "Upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom." Only Jehovah reigned over the Hebrews till they rejected him as their king. Saul was the first man to occupy Jehovah's throne; he was rejected. David then was selected to sit on the throne of Jehovah. Because he occupied the throne and was the head of a dynasty, the throne was also called David's throne. "And Solomon sat upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly." (1 Kings 2: 12.) "Then Solomon sat on the throne of Jehovah as king instead of David his father, and prospered." (1 Chron. 29: 23.) Hence to sit on David's throne is to sit on Jehovah's throne. After showing that Jesus was raised up to sit on David's throne, Peter concludes his argument with these words: "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." (Acts 2: 33.) It would not make sense for Peter to argue that Jesus was raised up to sit on David's throne, and then draw the conclusion that he was exalted to something else. Jesus was therefore on the throne of David when Peter preached at Pentecost. On that throne Jesus now reigns over his kingdom. Having established his kingdom, he now upholds "it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever."

### "In the Beginning Was the Word" (John 1: 1-4)

The Word is the *Son*, of Isaiah's prophecy, the one who later became known as Jesus the Christ. He was with the Father in the beginning, and took part in the creation. "All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made." "For in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist." (Col. 1: 16, 17.) "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds." (Heb. 1: 1, 2.) The language of these scriptures shows that the Word, the Son, was the active agent

in creating all things—God created all things through him. This helps us to understand the significance of the language in Genesis 1: 26: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." "In him was life." His life was inherent—our life is derived from him. He is the source of life. The life in him is the light of men. "Again therefore Jesus spake unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8: 12.)

### **"The World Knew Him Not" (Verses 10, 11)**

The world did not know the meaning of the prophecies that went before concerning him. When he came into the world, the world did not know him—did not acknowledge him. "He came unto his own"—his own things, as is shown by the marginal reading in the American Standard Version. He came to his own created things; but his own people received him not. In a general sense all the people in the world were his, for he created them; but the Jews were his in a special sense. John wrote this a long time after the personal ministry of Jesus ended. He did not refer merely to his rejection by the Jews during his personal ministry, but to the attitude of the whole world even after the gospel began to be preached in its fullness. Bear this in mind, and verses 12 and 13 will be easier to understand.

### **Born of the Will of God (Verses 12-14)**

Not every one rejected Christ; some of both Jews and Gentiles accepted him. To receive him was to believe on his name. This shows that John referred to the period, or dispensation, in which salvation was offered in the name of Christ—the present dispensation. This is shown also by the fact that John uses the present tense—believe. These who believe on his name have the right to become sons of God; he therefore does not become a child of God the moment he believes, but has the right to become a child of God.

People become children of God by being born again. In this present dispensation people are not children of God because of any blood relationship, nor by man's own will. Only by and through the will of God may we become children of God. "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth." (James 1: 18.) The New Testament is this will. Our souls are purified and we are born again by a willing obedience to God's will. (1 Pet. 1: 22-25.)

The Word became flesh—he took upon himself the nature of man. He took the form of a servant, "being made in the likeness of men." (Phil. 2: 5-8.) Peter, James, and John saw his glory on the mount of transfiguration. (2 Pet. 1: 16-18.)

### **"The Love of God Manifested" (1 John 4: 9-11)**

For love to be of any real benefit it must be manifested in deeds of helpfulness. God so loved that he gave his Son to save man. And he so loved the world that he revealed to us in the gospel the purpose of Christ's mission into the world, and told us how we may appropriate the benefits and blessings that are in Christ. God even manifested his love toward us while we were yet sinners. God did not love the sinner as such, but he loved him because of what he could make out of him. "We love, because he first loved us." He showed

us what real love is. And we can show our appreciation for the love God manifested to us, by loving one another. And this love for one another, to be of any value—to be, in fact, real love—must be manifested in words and deeds of helpfulness. "Love in its full perfection is seen, not in man's love to God, but in His to man, which reached a climax in His sending His Son to save us from our sins. The superiority of God's love does not lie merely in the fact of its being Divine. It is first in order of time and therefore necessarily spontaneous: ours is at best only love in return for love. His love is absolutely disinterested; ours cannot easily be so."—Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Jesus came into the world because the world needed him. The law of Moses had not saved the Jews from moral corruption and pollution. As a moral force Grecian philosophy had proved itself to be a failure; it could not regenerate man. Roman law, backed by Roman arms, restrained some forms of crime, but it could not reform character nor curb the passions of men. Christ in the hearts and lives of men accomplishes what all these other agencies could not do. Without Christ any people are in a desperate condition. Notice the condition of the nations that have rejected Christ. The communities in this country which have rejected Christ are steeped in sin and crime. To see what Christ can do for those who are ruled by him, you need only to notice that those who have sincerely accepted him as their Savior and King are not criminals. In Jesus is light, and life, and peace.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The names applied to Christ and their significance.  
The establishment of the kingdom.  
Christ on David's throne.  
How Jesus the Christ transforms lives.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Quote 1 Tim. 1: 15.  
What was the condition of the world when Jesus came?  
Why are people lost?  
Give some promises and prophecies of the coming of Christ.

#### Verse 6

Discuss the significance of the descriptive names applied to Jesus.  
Discuss Wonderful, Counsellor.  
Discuss the other terms of this verse.  
Discuss how he brings peace.

#### Verse 7

What is said of his kingdom?  
Discuss the throne of David.

Give proof that Christ now occupies the throne of David.

#### John 1: 1-4

Discuss the part the Son had in the creation.  
What is meant by, "in him was life"?

#### Verses 10, 11

Discuss these verses.

#### Verses 12-14

What is it to receive Christ?  
Of what period was John speaking?  
How are men born again?  
Discuss verse 14.

#### 1 John 4: 9-11

What is real love?  
When did God manifest his love for us?  
How may we show our appreciation for that love?  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson XIII—December 28, 1941

## THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE

John 14: 1-6; Rev. 22: 1-5

- 1 Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me.  
 2 In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: for I go to prepare a place for you.  
 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.  
 4 And whither I go, ye know the way.  
 5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?  
 6 Jē'sūs saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me.

1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2 In the midst of the street thereof. And on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life, bearing twelve *manner* of fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

3 And there shall be no curse any more; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein; and his servants shall serve him;

4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads.  
 5 And there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*In my Father's house are many mansions.*” (John 14: 2.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rev. 21: 1-7.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

|              |    |                                     |
|--------------|----|-------------------------------------|
| December 22. | M. | The Christian's Hope (John 14: 1-6) |
| December 23. | T. | Hope in God (Psalm 130: 1-8)        |
| December 24. | W. | Hope in Christ (Col. 1: 24-29)      |
| December 25. | T. | A Living Hope (1 Pet. 1: 3-9)       |
| December 26. | F. | Hope in Salvation (Rom. 8: 18-25)   |
| December 27. | S. | Hope of Eternal Life (Tit. 1: 1-4)  |
| December 28. | S. | A Blessed Hope (Tit. 2: 11-15)      |

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—For John 14: 1-6, A.D. 31; more specifically, the night in which Jesus was betrayed. The time in which the book of the Revelation was written is not known. Some place the writing before the destruction of Jerusalem; some, as late as A.D. 96.

*Places.*—Jerusalem; the Isle of Patmos.

*Persons.*—Jesus and his disciples; John and the seven churches in Asia.

*Lesson Links.*—The gospel of Christ was intended to deliver men from sin—from the bondage of Satan, to make them useful and helpful in this life, and to prepare them for heaven and immortal glory. If there be no future life, then the reason for our existence is an unsolved mystery. But this life is not all—there is a life beyond this present mode of existence. The idea of a future life could not have originated out of nothing; the idea could not have been so nearly universal, had there been no basis for it. Let the skeptic explain how the idea originated.

The Old Testament worthies looked forward to a future life. “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but

having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things make it manifest that they are seeking after a country of their own. . . . But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city." (Heb. 11: 13-16.) Job said, "But as for me I know that my Redeemer liveth, and at last he will stand up upon the earth: and after my skin, even this body, is destroyed, then without my flesh shall I see God; whom I, even I, shall see, on my side, and mine eyes shall behold, and not as a stranger." (Job 19: 25-27.) In Isaac Leeser's translation verse 26 reads thus: "And after my skin is cut to pieces will this be: and then freed from my body shall I behold God." Though the body dies, the spirit lives on. Jesus said, "Whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11: 26.) That is a good question for a materialist to ponder. Many other passages show that Jesus and his apostles were not materialists. However the foregoing statement of Jesus settles the matter with all who believe his words. But as there is to be a future life, there must be a place, a region, a country, in which we shall dwell. Our lesson deals with that place.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### "Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled" (Verse 1)

This section of our lesson is a part of a speech Jesus made to his disciples on the night in which he was betrayed into the hands of his enemies. It seems that the speech was made after they had eaten the passover and therefore after the Lord's Supper was instituted. It was a solemn hour. Jesus had repeatedly told the disciples that he must be killed in Jerusalem, and his words must have finally impressed them, and filled them with dread. They could not understand it—they knew not what would be the outcome of it all. Jesus sought to reassure their troubled hearts. "Believe in God, believe also in me." The marginal reading has, "Or, ye believe in God." The Greek text can be translated in either of the following ways: "Believe in God, believe also in me"; or, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me"; or, "Ye believe in God, and ye believe in me." It does not seem reasonable to conclude that he was exhorting his disciples to believe in God and in him; for a few moments later, in his prayer to the Father, he said of them, "Now they know that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are from thee: for the words which thou gavest me I have given unto them; and they received them, and knew of a truth that I came forth from thee, and they believed that thou didst send me." (John 17: 7, 8.) It could not be therefore that he was commanding, or exhorting, them to believe. But under the circumstances it would seem reasonable for him to say, "Let not your hearts be troubled, for ye believe in God and in me; ye ought therefore to know that all our plans will work out for the best."

#### The Many Mansions (Verses 2, 3)

Jesus continues to give his troubled disciples assurance. A glorious future was before them. We cannot comprehend this house of many mansions. Being the house of so glorious a Being it will be sublime beyond the farthest reach of our imaginations. Just what Jesus

would do in preparing an abiding place for his disciples we know not. All we know is, that he said, "I go to prepare a place for you." With a love that prompted him to die for them and with all the riches of the universe at his command, what a place that will be, which he has gone to prepare. He is preparing a place in heaven for those who are prepared for it. After a while, we know not when, Jesus will come again. He gives this assurance: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." When the Lord comes again the dead saints will be raised before the living saints ascend; "then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess. 4: 16-18.) We need not worry about the time of his coming again, but should strive to be ready when he comes.

### **The Way, the Truth, the Life (Verses 4-6)**

"And whither I go, ye know the way." Did Jesus here refer to the manner of his death, the way by which he would depart from this life? It seems so. If so, he had repeatedly told them the manner of his death. It seems that the disciples had not fully grasped the idea that Jesus was to return to the Father in heaven. "Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?" As he did not know where Jesus was going, he of course did not know the road, or the way, he would travel. In reply to Thomas, Jesus made a statement that is as full and comprehensive as a statement can well be. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me." It is through Christ that we have access to the favor of God. (Rom. 5: 1, 2.) Only by and through him can anyone come to the Father. To the disputing Jews Jesus said, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8: 24.) There is only one Way to the Father—only one name in which people may be saved. (Acts 4: 12.) Both Jew and Gentile have access to the Father through this one Way. (Eph. 2: 18.) "The truth"—all truth centers in Jesus. Grace and truth came through him. (John 1: 17.) Whatever does not harmonize with Jesus and his gospel is false. "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." (John 18: 37.) He is also the life—life is inherent in him. From him all life comes. Our life is derived from him, his life is underived—self-existent. His life is eternal. As he is the Way to the Father, no man can come to the Father, but by him. Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." (John 10: 10.) To his enemies he said, "Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life." (John 5: 40.)

### **The Heavenly Home (Rev. 22: 1-5)**

John saw, in a vision, that glorious abode which Jesus, on the night in which he was betrayed, promised to prepare for his disciples. His description of what he saw begins with the twenty-first chapter of the book of the Revelation, and continues through the twenty-second chapter. The student should read both chapters.

The glory, the happiness, the bliss, the things which make that city so desirable, can best be appreciated by comparing conditions

there with conditions that prevail here. Here there are many things both dangerous and unpleasant—slanderers, liars, drunkards, thieves, robbers, moral perverts, dogs in human form, murderers, and every other conceivable form of human wickedness and sin. That home prepared for those who love and serve the Lord will be free of all such characters. "He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." (Rev. 21: 7, 8.) "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie: but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life." (Rev. 21: 27.) "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.) "If so be that it is a righteous thing with God to recompense affliction to them that afflict you, and to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints." (2 Thess. 1: 6-10.)

Here we have sickness, pains, and death, and all the sorrows and tears and heartaches that accompany such calamities. Not so will it be in heaven. "And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God: and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away." (Rev. 21: 3, 4.) And there shall be no darkness, no night, in that city.

"A river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb," will flow through the midst of the street of that city; and on each side of it there will be a tree of life. What a beautiful scene John beheld! How satisfying will the realization of it be! "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat." (Rev. 7: 16.)

"And there shall be no curse any more"—no evils of any sort will befall the inhabitants of that city. The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein; not thrones, but *throne*. The throne that Jesus will occupy at that time will still be the throne of God the Father. Some have evidently overlooked this plainly stated fact.

"And his servants shall serve him." "Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them." (Rev. 7: 15.) Heaven will not be a place of idleness; but what the nature of that service shall be, no one can now tell. In service to the King there is obedience to him. This life is a training for that service; that is, this life of service to God. Obedience is a matter that must be learned. If we do not learn to obey here, it will be too late to learn after we leave this life. This is the training

ground. "Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered." (Heb. 5: 8.) At death it will then be too late to prepare for that home; for then, "He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still: and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still: and he that is holy, let him be made holy still." (Rev. 22: 11.)

But who shall enter that city? "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city." (Rev. 22: 14.) In the great day of judgment God "will render to every man according to his works: to them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and incorruption," he will render eternal life. (Rom. 2: 6, 7.) After mentioning a number of things which the Christian must do, Peter adds: "For thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (See 2 Pet. 1: 5-11.)

### SOME REFLECTIONS

When the great day of judgment comes, you will be only one of the innumerable host that will stand before the throne of judgment. You will realize then, as never before, that you are to be judged according to the deeds done in the body. Your mind will go back over the deeds of your life. Will you then feel as sure of yourself as you sometimes do now? Oh, no; but the sweetest music that you will have ever heard, if your robes are then clean and white, will be the words of the Master: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." God grant that we may not hear in that great day the words, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels."

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5: 25-27.)

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The judgment as described in Matt. 25: 31-46.

The judgment as described in Rev. 20: 11-15.

Preparing for heaven.

Discuss Rom. 2: 4-11.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
What is the gospel intended to accomplish?  
Give evidence that the Old Testament worthies looked for a future life.  
Show that death does not end man's existence.  
Discuss John 14: 1.

#### Verses 2, 3

Repeat and discuss these verses.

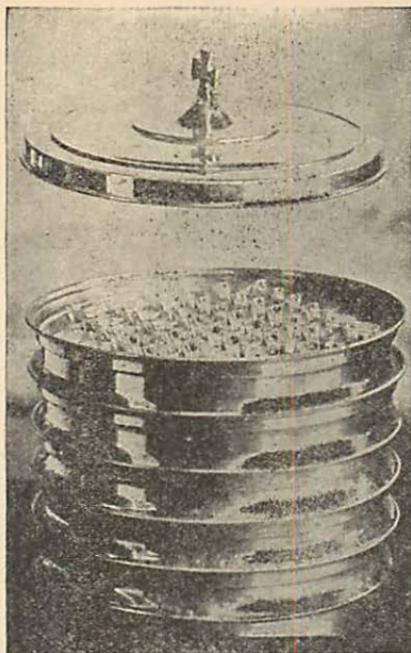
#### Verses 4-6

Discuss the way—the truth—the life.  
Discuss coming to the Father.

#### Rev. 22: 1-5

Name the characters John says will not be in the heavenly home.  
Give points of contrast between this life and the life beyond.  
What will the redeemed do in heaven?  
Show that obedience must be learned here.  
Who will enter that city?  
Discuss the reflections.

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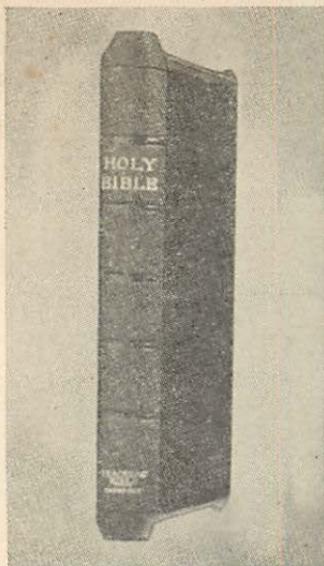
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5 But the Châl-dé-âns' army pursued after them, and overtook Zed-ê-ki-âh in the plains of Jericho: and when they had

<sup>a</sup> 2 Ki. 25.  
<sup>b</sup> 22-25.  
ch. 40. 5-9.  
<sup>c</sup> 11-20.  
<sup>d</sup> ch. 37. 12.

<sup>b</sup> Gêd-â-lî-âh the son of A-hî-kâm the son of Shâ-phân, that he should carry him home: so he dwelt <sup>c</sup> among the people.

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