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A FOREWORD

In penning the last word of this, the twenty-second 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."

THE AUTHOR.

BIBLE DICTIONARY OF PROPER NAMES
Arranged and Compiled by H. LEO BOLES

A

Aaron (bright or shining), Ex. 4:14. Brother of Moses and first high priest.
Ab, Abba (father), Gal. 4:6. Name given to God.
Abednego (servant of Nego), Dan. 1:7. One of Daniel's companions.
Abel (breath. vanity), Gen. 4:1. Second son of Adam.
Abiathar (father of abundance), 1 Sam. 23:9. High priest and fourth in descent from Eli.
Abigail (father is joy), I Sam. 25:14. Wife of Nabal; became David's wife.
Abimelech (Meleeh is father), Gen. 26:1. King of Gerar in the time of Isaac.
Abishai (my father is Jesse), I Sam. 26:6-9. The eldest of the three sons of Zeruah, David's sister, and brother of Joab.
Abner (father is light), 1 Sam. 14:50. King Solomon's captain.
Abraham, Abram (father of a multitude, exalted father), Gen. 12:1. Founder of the Hebrews and father of the faithful,
Absalom (father is peace), 2 Sam. 15:1. Third son of David.
Achaia (trouble), Acts 18:12. A Roman province which included Greece.
Achan (trouble), Josh. 7:19-26. Stole golden wedge, etc. Stoned by Joshua.
Adam (ruddy, one made or produced), Gen. 3:15. Name of the first man.
Adonijah (my Lord is Jehovah), 2 Sam. 3:4. Fourth son of David.
Agabus, Acts 11:27. A Christian prophet who came from Jerusalem.
Agag, 1 Sam. 15:8. Title of the king of Amalek.
Agrippa, Acts 12:20. One of the Herods.
Ahab (father's brother), 1 Kings 18:19. Son of Omri, seventh king of Israel; very wicked,
Abimelech (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.
Ambassador (messenger or agent), 2 Cor. 5:20. A person commissioned.
Amen (true), Isa. 65:16. Close of prayer. Amos (burden),
Amos 1:1. Minor prophet.
Amphipolis (a city surrounded by the sea), Acts 17:1. A city of Macedonia, through which Paul and Silas passed on their way from Philippi to Thessalonica.
Amram (an exalted people), Ex:6:18. Father of Moses.
Ananias (Jehovah hath been gracious), Acts 5:1. Husband of Sapphira, smitten dead.
Anathema (cursed), Gal. 1:9. A word used by Paul to show condemnation.
Anise (dill), Matt. 23:23. A small garden plant.
Anna (grace), Luke 2:36. A prophetess at Jerusalem.
Annas (humble), Acts 4:6. The son of Seth; was appointed high priest A.D. 7.
Antichrist (opposed to Christ), I 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. 37:57. A city of Judea.
Aristarchus (the best ruler), Acts 20:4. A companion of Paul on his third missionary journey.
Asa (physician, healer), 2 Chron. 14:8. Third king of Judea; reigned forty years.
Ashpenaz (horse-nose), Dan. 1:3. Master of eunuchs.
Asia (), Acts 19: 26. Continent, also Roman Province.
Athens (city of Athena), Acts 17:21. The capital of Attica, and the chief city of Grecian learning.
Augustus (venerable), Luke 2:1. The first Roman emperor.
Azotus (Ashdod, a stronghold), Acts 8:40. City nearly midway between Gaza and Joppa.

B

Baal (owner or lord), Num. 22:41, The male god of the Phenician and Canaanitish nations.
Babel (confusion), Gen. 10:10; 11:1-9. Tower built on the Plain of Shinar.
Babylon (from Babel), Jar. 24:5. The land of the Chaldeans.
Baiaam (from Baal), Num. 23:19. A prophet of Midian who tried to curse Israel.
Barabbas (son of Abba), John 18:40. The robber who was released at the trial of Jesus.
Balak (making waste), Num. 22:24. King of Moabites.
Baptist, the (the baptizer), Matt. 3:1. The same as John the Baptist.
Barak (lightning), Judges 4:1-24. Defeats Sisera's army.
Barbarian (any one not a Greek), Rom. 1:14. Applied to those who were not of the Greek nation.
Bar-Jesus (son of Jesus), Acts 13:6. A false prophet.
Barnabas (son of consolation or exhortation), Acts 4:36. An early disciple of Christ and traveling companion of Paul.
Barsabbas (son of Sabas or rest), Acts 1:23. Voted on as an apostle to take Judas' place.
Bath-sheba (daughter of the oath). 2 Sam. 11:3. Wife of Uriah; became David's wife.
Beelzebub (Lord of the House), Matt. 12:24. Title of heathen god.
Belial (worthlessness), 2 Cor. 6:15. An expression for lawlessness.
Belshazzar (may Bel protect the king), Dan. 5:2. The last king of Babylon.
Benjamin (son of the right hand), Gen. 35:16. The youngest son of Jacob.
Berea (well watered), Acts 17:10. A city of Macedonia.
Bernice (bringing victory), Acts 25:13. The eldest daughter of Herod Agrippa I.
Bethany (house of dates), Mark 11:1. A village situated near the Mount of Olives.
Bethel (the house of God), Gen. 12:8; 28:11-19. City about twelve miles north of Jerusalem.
Bethesda (house of mercy), John 5:2. Market place near Jerusalem.
Bethlehem (house of bread), 1 Sam. 17:12. City of David. birthplace of Christ.
Bethphage (house of figs), Luke 19:29. Place on the Mount of Olives, on the road between Jericho and Jerusalem.
Bethsaida (house of fish), John 12:21. The home of Andrew, Peter, and Philip.
Bildad (Bel hath loved, or, son of contention), Job 2:11. The second of Job's three friends.
Bilhah (timid, bashful), Gen. 29:29. Concubine of Jacob, and mother of Dan and Naphtali.
Blasphemy (speak against), Matt. 12:32. Speaking evil against God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit.
Blastus (sprout), Acts 12:20. The chamberlain of Herod Agrippa I.
Boanerges (sons of thunder), Mark 3:17. Name given to the two sons of Zebedee.

C

Caesar (Latin name), John 19:12. In the New Testament, always the Roman emperor.
Caiaphas (depression), Matt. 26:3. High priest of the Jews.
Cain (possession), Gen. 4:1. Oldest son of Adam; killed his brother Abel.
Caleb (capable), Num. 13:6. One of the faithful spies.
Cana (place of reeds), John 2:1. Place of Christ's first miracle.

Canaan (low, fiat), Gen. 10:6. Fourth son of Ham; name applied to Palestine.
 Candace (name of dynasty). Acts 8:27. Not the name of an individual, but of a dynasty of Ethiopian queens.
 Capernaum (village of Nahum), Matt. 4:13. Village located on the western shore of Galilee.
 Carpus (wrist). 2 Tim. 4:13. A Christian at Troas.
 Cesarea (Kaisareia Caesar), Acts 8:40. City on coast of Palestine.
 Cesarea Philippi (from Caesar and Philip), Matt. 16:13. City twenty miles north of the Sea of Galilee.
 Chemosh (subduer), Num. 21:29. A god of the Moabites.
 Chinnereth (flute, harp), Josh. 19:35. Another name for the Sea of Galilee.
 Chorazin, Matt. 11:21. One of the cities in which Jesus did many mighty works.
 Christ (anointed), 1 Tim. 1:2. The same as Messiah.
 Chuzas (the seer), Luke 8:3. The house steward of Herod Antipas.
 Cilicia (the land of Celiz), Acts 9:30. A province in the southeast of Asia Minor.
 Circumcision (cut around), Lev. 12:3. A Jewish custom.
 Claudius (lame), Acts 18:2. Fourth Roman emperor; reigned from A.D. 41 to 54.
 Cleopas (from Cleopatra), John 19:25. One of the two disciples to whom Jesus talked on the way to Emmaus.
 Corban, Matt. 15:5. An offering to God.
 Colosse, Col. 1:2. A city of Phrygia in Asia Minor.
 Corinth, Acts 18:1-18. City of Greece, about forty miles west of Athens.
 Cornelius (of a horn), Acts 10:1. A Roman centurion of the Italian cohorts stationed in Cesarea.
 Crescens (growing), 2 Tim. 4:10. An assistant of Paul, said to have been one of the seventy disciples sent out by Christ.
 Crispus (curled), Acts 18:8. Ruler of Jewish synagogues at Corinth.
 Cummin, Matt. 23:23. Small plant with an aromatic flavor.
 Cyprus, Acts 4:36. An island in the Mediterranean Sea, about a hundred and forty miles long and sixty miles wide.
 Cyrcne, Acts 2:10. The principal city of that part of Northern Africa which was anciently called Cyrenaica.
 Cyrus (the son), 2 Chron. 36:22. The founder of the Persian Empire.

D

Damascus, Acts 9:11. One of the most ancient cities in the world, located in Syria.
 Daniel (God is my judge), Dan. 1:3. The fourth of "the greater prophets."
 Darius (lord), Dan. 6:1. The name of several kings of Media and Persia.
 David (well beloved), 1 Sam. 16:1. Youngest son of Jesse; second king of Israel.
 Deborah (a bee), Gen. 35:8; Judges 4:5. Name of Rebekah's nurse; also a prophetess.
 Decapolis (ten cities), Matt. 4:25. A district east of the Jordan and south of the Sea of Galilee.
 Delilah (languishing), Judges 16:4-18. Delivered Samson to the Philistines.
 Demetrius (belonging to Demeter), Acts 19:24. A maker of silver shrines at Ephesus.
 Demas (governor of the people), Col. 4:14. Companion of Paul during his first imprisonment at Rome.
 Demoniac, Matt. 12:22. One possessing a demon.
 Denarius (containing ten), Matt. 18:28. A Roman silver coin, worth about sixteen cents.
 Derbe (juniper), Acts 14:20. City not far from Iconium.
 Deuteronomy (the giving of the law the second time). Fifth book of the Bible.
 Diana (Latin name), Acts 19:24. The Ephesian goddess.
 Diotrefes (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.
Ehai (stone), Deut. 11:26-29. Mountain.
Eden (pleasure), Gen. 2:8-14. The first residence of man.
Edom (red), Gen. 32:3. Name given to Esau and his country.
Egypt (land of the Copts), Ex. 1:14. Place where Israel was held in bondage.
Egyptian (native of Egypt), Acts 21:38. An inhabitant of Egypt.
Elder (old man), Gen. 24:2. Name applied to rulers of the city and officers of the church.
Elijah (Jehovah is my God), I Kings 17:1. Prophet in the days of Ahab.
Elisabeth (God is an oath), Luke 1:36. Wife of Zacharias and mother of John the Baptist.
Elisha (God is my salvation), 1 Kings 19:16. Prophet who succeeded Elijah.
Elymas (a wise man), Acts 13:6. A sorcerer who opposed Paul.
Endor (fountain of Dor), I Sam. 28:7. Home of the witch with whom Saul communed.
Enoch (dedicated), Gen. 4:17. Walked with God and was translated.
Epaphras (lovely), Col. 1:7. A fellow laborer and prisoner with Paul.
Ephesus (permission), Acts 19:29. The capital of the Roman province of Asia.
Ephraim (double fruitfulness), Gen. 41:50. Younger son of Joseph.
Epicureans (from Epicurus), Acts 17:18. Those who believed in getting the greatest pleasure out of life.
Erastus (beloved), Acts 19:22. One of Paul's attendants at Ephesus.
Esau (hairy), Gen. 25:25. Twin brother of Jacob.
Esther (a star), Esth. 7:3. Jewishwife 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 24:26. A Roman officer who held Paul in prison.
Festus (festival), Acts 24:27. Roman officer who succeeded Felix.
First-born, Ex. 13:12. First male born into the family, who inherited the name and property of the father.
First Fruits, Ex. 22:29. First ripe fruit given to Jehovah.
Frankincense, Ex. 30:34-36. A sacrificial fumigation.

G

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

of Galilee.
Galilee (circuit), Luke 17:11. The northern country of Palestine.
Gallio (Latin name), Acts 18:12. The Roman proconsul of Achaia when Paul was at Corinth.
Gamaliel (recompense of God), Acts 5:24. A noted teacher of the law in Jerusalem; Paul's teacher.
Gaza (the fortified), Acts 8:26. One of the cities of the Philistines.
Gennesaret (garden of the princes), Matt. 14:34. A name given to the fertile plains on the western shore of the Lake of Galilee.
Gentile (nation), Acts 11:18. Any one who was not of the Jewish race.
Gergesenes (See Gadarenes).
Gethsemane (an oil press), Matt. 26:36. Garden near Jerusalem.
Gerizim (cutter), Deut. 11:26-29. Mountain in Ephraim.
Gibeah (a hill), Josh. 15:57. Located in Benjamin.
Gideon (he that cuts down), Judges 6:34. The fifth recorded judge.
Gilboa (a bubbling spring), 1 Sam. 28:4. Mountain where Saul was killed.
Golgotha (skull), Matt. 27:33. The Hebrew name of the spot where Christ was crucified.
Goliath (an exile), 1 Sam. 17:4. The famous giant whom David killed.
Gomorrah (submersion), Gen. 14:2-8. The city which was destroyed with fire from heaven.
Gospel (good message), Rom. 1:16. Good tidings of joy.
Greece, Greeks, Grecians, Dan. 8:21; Isa. 66:19; Acts 20:2. Names of the country and people who preceded the Roman Empire.

H

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

I

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

J

Jachin (he doth establish), 1 Kings 7:21. One of the two pillars which was set up in the porch of the temple.
Jacob (supplanter), Gen. 25:26. Son of Isaac and Rebekah, twin brother of Esau.
Jambres, 2 Tim. 3:8. One of the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses.
James (the Greek form of "Jacob"), Matt. 10:2. Son of Zebedee, brother of John, and one of the twelve apostles.
Jannes, 2 Tim. 3:8. An Egyptian magician who joined Jambres in opposing Moses.
Jason, Acts 17:5. Entertained Paul and Silas; attacked by Jewish mob.
Jebusites (from Jebus), Num. 13:29. One of the Canaanitish tribes in Palestine.
Jehoiada (Jehovah knows), 2 Sam. 8:18. High priest at one time.
Jehoshaphat (Jehovah hath judged), 1 Kings 15:24. Fourth king of Judah, son of Asa.
Jehovah (I Am, the Eternal Living One), Lev. 24:15. One of the names given to God.
Jehu (Jehovah is he), 2 Kings 9:2. Founder of the fifth dynasty of the kings of Israel.
Jephunneh (it will be prepared), Num. 13:6. Father of Caleb, a good spy.
Jeremiah (whom Jehovah appoints), Jer. 1:1. One of the major prophets.
Jericho (place of fragrance), Josh. 13:16. First city destroyed by Joshua; its walls were thrown by faith.
Jeroboam (whose people are many), 1 Kings 11:28. The first king of the divided kingdom of Israel.
Jerusalem (the city of peace), 2 Chron 25:23. The religious and political capital of the Israelites.
Jesse (wealthy), Ruth 4:18-22. The father of David, and son of Obed, and the son of Boaz, by the Moabitess, Ruth.
Jesus (Jehovah is salvation), Matt. 1:21. One of the names given to Christ, the Messiah.
Jew (a man of Judah), Mark 7:3. A name applied to the members of the kingdom of Judah after the separation of the ten tribes; later applied to all Israelites.
Jeab (Jehovah is father), 2 Sam. 14:1-20. Nephew of David and captain of his hosts.
Job, Job 1:1. Probably one of the patriarchs.
Joel (Jehovah is God), 1 Sam. 8:2. One of the minor prophets.
Johanna (grace or gift of God), Luke 3:27. The name of a woman. John the Baptist (Jehovah's gift), Matt. 3:1. A forerunner of Christ.
John (from Johanan), Luke 1:11. Name given to son of Zacharias, later called "John the Baptist."
Jonah (dove), 2 Kings 14:25. The fifth of the minor prophets.
Joppa (beauty), Acts 11:5. A town on the southwest coast of Palestine.
Jordan (the descender), Josh. 2:7. The river which bounds the eastern border of Palestine.
Joseph (may he add), Gen. 37:2. The elder of the two sons of Jacob by Rachel.
Joshua (Jehovah is salvation), Ex. 17:9. Moses' minister and successor as leader of the children of

Israel.

Jot (the English form of the Greek iota, the smallest letter of the Greek alphabet), Matt. 5:18. It was formed like an English comma (,).

Jubilee (joyful shout), Lev. 25:11. Every fiftieth year was called the year of Jubilee.

Judah (praised). Gen. 37:26. The fourth son of Jacob by Leah.

Judas Iscariot (Judas of Kerioth), John 6:71. The name of the betrayer of Jesus.

Julius (fr. Greek), Acts 27:1. A Roman centurion.

Jupiter (a father that helps), Acts 14:12. The national god of the Hellenic race.

Justus (just), Acts 18:7. A Christian at Corinth with whom Paul lodged.

K

Kadesh, Kadesh-Barnea (holy), Num. 13:3. Place where Mariam died, and the farthest point reached in the wandering in the wilderness.

Kidron, or Kedron (turbid), Luke 22:39. Name of brook or valley, southeast of Jerusalem.

Kish (a bow), 1 Chron. 23:21. The father of Saul

Kohath (assembly), Ex. 6:16. One of the three sons of Levi.

L

Laban (white), Gen. 24:10. Father of Leah and Rachel; father-in-law of Jacob.

Laodicea (justice of the people), Col. 4:16. A town in the Roman province of Asia.

Laodiceans, Col. 4:16; Rev. 3:14. The inhabitants of Laodicea.

Lazarus (whom God helps), John 11:1. Brother of Martha and Mary; lived at Bethany; raised from the dead by Jesus.

Leah (wearied), Gen. 29:16. Daughter of Laban, first wife of Jacob.

Lebanon (white), Deut. 1:7. Mountain range north of Palestine.

Lehi (jawbone), Judges 15:9. A place in Judah.

Levi (joined), Gen. 29:34. Name of the third son of Jacob by Leah.

Levite (joined), Luke 10:32. One of the tribe of Levi. Leviticus. Third book of the Bible.

Libertines (from liberty), Acts 6:9. Applied to Jews who had been taken prisoners and then set free.

Lois (agreeable), 2 Tim. 1:5. The grandmother of Timothy.

Lord's Day (first day of the week), Rev. 1:10. Corresponds to our Sunday.

Lot (veil, or covering), Gen. 11:27. The son of Haran and nephew of Abraham.

Lucius, Acts 13:1. One of the teachers of Antioch.

Luke (light-giving), Acts 13:1; Col. 4:14. Traveled with Paul and wrote the book that bears his name.

Lyeaonia (landing of Lyeanon, or wolf land), Acts 14:11. A province in Asia Minor.

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

Lysias (ft. Greek), Acts 23:26. A Roman officer.

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

M

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

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

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

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

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

Mammon (riches), Matt. 6-24. Word used to personify wealth.

Manaen (comforter), Acts 13:1. Foster brother of Herod and teacher and prophet in church at Antioch.
 Manasseh (forgetting), Gen. 4:51. The oldest son of Joseph.
 Manna (What is this?), Ex. 16:14-36. Food given the children of Israel in the wilderness.
 Manoah (rest), Judges 13:2. Father of Samson.
 Mark, Acts 12:12. One of the evangelists and writer of the book that bears his name.
 Martha (a lady), Luke 10:38. Sister of Lazarus and Mary.
 Mary (a tear). A common name in the New Testament; mother of Jesus.
 Matthew (gift of Jehovah), Matt. 10:3. One of the twelve apostles and writer of the first book of the New Testament.
 Matthias (gift of God), Acts 1:26. The apostle elected to fill the place of the traitor, Judas.
 Melchizedek (king of righteousness), Gen 14:18-20. King and priest of God; type of Christ as priest.
 Melita (premeditate), Acts 28:1. An island in the Mediterranean Sea.
 Mercury (herald of the gods), Acts 14:12. The god of commerce and bargains.
 Meshach (guest of a king), Dan. 1:4. One of Daniel's friends in captivity.
 Mesopotamia (between the rivers), Deut. 23:4. Country between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.
 Messiah (anointed), Matt. 20:20. A prophetic name applied to Jesus.
 Methuselah (man of the dart), Gen. 5:25. The son of Enoch, and the oldest man recorded among the patriarchs.
 Midian (strife), Gen. 25:2. A son of Abraham by Keturah.
 Miletus, Acts 20:15. City on the coast, thirty-six miles to the south of Ephesus.
 Mint, Luke 11:42. An herb which the Jews used as their tithe.
 Mite, Mark 12:41-44. A coin current in Palestine in the time of Jesus, worth about one-fifth of a cent.
 Mizpah (a watchtower), Josh. 18:26. A city in Benjamin.
 Moab (of his father), Deut. 2:11. Son of Lot by his eldest daughter.
 Molech (king), Jer. 49:1. The god of the Ammonites.
 Moriah (chosen by Jehovah), Gen. 22:2. The mount where Abraham offered Isaac.
 Moses (drawn), Ex. 2:5. The leader of God's people.
 Myrrh, Ex. 30:23. One of the ingredients of the oil of holy ointment.
 Mysia (land of beech trees), Acts 16:7. Region about the frontier of the provinces of Asia and Bithynia.

N

Naaman (pleasantness), 2 Kings 5:18. Captain of the army of Syria; a leper, cleansed by Elisha.
 Nabal (fool), I Sam. 25:3. First husband of Abigail, one of David's wives.
 Naomi (my delight), Ruth 1:2. Wife of Elimelech and mother-in-law of Ruth.
 Naphtali (wrestling), Gen. 30:8. The fifth son of Jacob; son of Bilhah, one of Rachel's handmaids.
 Nathan (a giver), 2 Sam. 7:2. Name of the prophet who rebuked David.
 Nathaniel (gift of God), John 1:47. An early disciple of Jesus; some think the same as Bartholomew.
 Nazarene (from Nazareth), Matt. 2:23. A name sometimes given to Jesus.
 Nazareth (the guarded one), Matt. 2:23. A village in Galilee and home of Jesus.
 Nazirite (one separated), Num. 6:1-21. Person who takes a peculiar vow to be set apart from others for the service of God. Sometimes spelled "Nazarite."
 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.

Nieodemus (conqueror of the people), John 3:1. A Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews and teacher of Israel who visited Jesus at night.
Nicolaitans (followers of Nicholas), Rev. 2:6. A sect whose deeds were severely condemned.
Niger (black), Acts 13:1. One of the teachers and prophets in the church at Antioch.
Nile (blue, dark), Gen. 15:8. The principal river of Egypt.
Nimrod (rebellion, or the valiant), Gen. 10:8. A grandson of Ham.
Nineveh (abode of Ninus), Gen 10:11. The capital of the ancient kingdom of Assyria.
Ninevites, Luke 11:30. The inhabitants of Nineveh. to whom Jonah preached
Numbers. The fourth book of the Old Testament.
Nymphas (bridegroom), Col. 4:15. A wealthy Christian in Laodicea.

O

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

P

Padan-aram (tableland of Aram) Gen. 28:2. Name applied to country which bordered on the Euphrates to distinguish it from the mountainous district.
Palestine (land of strangers), Ex. 15:14. One name for the land of Canaan.
Palsy (contracted from paralysis). Matt. 12:10-13. A disease which caused the loss of the power of motion.
Pamphylia (of every tribe), Acts 13:13. One of the provinces on the coast of Asia Minor.
Paphos (boiling or hot), Acts 13:6. City on Island of Cyprus. which Paul and Barnabas visited on first missionary journey.
Parable (placed beside, a comparison), Matt. 24:32. A form of teaching by comparison.
Paradise (orchard of pleasure, pleasure ground), 2 Cor. 12:4. A term applied figuratively to the celestial dwelling of the righteous.
Parthians (from Parthia), Acts 2:9. People who lived in Parthia.
Passover (commemorating the death angel's passing over the houses of Israel in Egypt), Ex. 12:1-51. The first of the three great annual feasts of the Jews, held on the fourteenth day of the first month.
Patmos, Rev. 1:9. Name of an island in the Aegean Sea, twenty miles south of Samos; place where John was banished.
Patriarch (father of a tribe), Acts 7:8. Name given to the head of a family or tribe in Old Testament times.
Paul (small little), Acts 23:6. Name given to the apostle to the Gentiles.
Peninnah (coral, or pearl), I Sam. 1:2. One of Elkanah's wives.
Pentateuch (five). 'Greek name given to the first five books of the Old Testament.
Pentecost (fiftieth), Acts 2:1. Feast which came fifty days after the Passover.
Perga (fr. Greek), Acts 13:13. A city in Pamphylia.
Pergamos (height, elevation), Rev. 1:11. A city of Mysia, about three miles to the north of the River Caicus.
Pergamum, Rev. 1:11. Same as Pergamos.
Persia (pure, splendid), Ezek. 38:5. Name given to an ancient empire.
Peter (a rock or stone), John 1:42. Name given to Simon, the brother of Andrew, one of the twelve apostles.
Pharaoh, Ex. 1:8. Common title of the kings of Egypt.
Pharisees, Matt. 15:7. A religious sect among the Jews. They believed in a resurrection of the dead.
Philadelphia (brotherly love), Rev. 3:9. Town on the borders of Lydia and Phrygia.
Philemon (loving), Col. 4:9. Name of Christian to whom Paul addressed his epistle in behalf of

Onesimus.

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

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

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

Phinehas (mouth of brass), I Sam. 1:3. Son of Eli.

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

Phoenicia (land of palm trees), 2 Sam. 5:11. Country on east coast of Mediterranean Sea.

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

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

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

Pontus (the sea), Acts 2:9.

Province of Asia Minor.

Pretorium (palace), Matt. 27:27. Place where court was held. Priest. Gen. 14:18. One who officiated at the altar.

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

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

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

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

Publican (Roman taxgatherer), Luke 3:13. Name of one who gathered taxes for the Roman government.

Pyrthus, 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. 16:22. The seventh day of the week.

Sabbath Day's Journey, Acts 1:12. About three-fourths of a mile.

Sabbatical Year, Ex. 23:10. Each seventh year.

Sadducees (followers of Zadok), Matt. 3:7. Religious sect opposed to the Pharisees.

Salamis (salt), Acts 13:5. City in the eastern part of the Island of Cyprus.
 Samaria (watch mountain), 1 Kings 16:23 Name of a city thirty miles north of Jerusalem; also of the country surrounding it.
 Samaritan (watch mountain, Samaria), Luke 10:33. An inhabitant of Samaria.
 Samson (like the sun), Judges 15:20. One of the strongest men; one of the judges of Israel.
 Samuel (asked of God), 1 Sam. 3:1-18. The last judge of Israel.
 Sanhedrin (a council chamber), Matt. 26:57. The supreme court of the Jewish nation.
 Sapphira (bright color, beautiful), Acts 5:1-11. Wife of Ananias.
 Sarah (princess), Gen. 20:12. Wife of Abraham, mother of Isaac.
 Sarai (my princess), Gen. 11:29. First name of Sarah.
 Sardis (red), Rev. 1:11. A city of Asia Minor, and capital of Lydia.
 Satan (adversary), Matt. 16:23. Name applied to the devil.
 Saul (desired), 2 Sam. 1:23. Name of the first king of Israel; first name of the apostle Paul.
 Sceva (implement), Acts 19:14. A Jew residing at Ephesus when Paul visited that city.
 Scribes (to write), I Kings 4:3. Those who transcribed the law.
 Scythian, Col. 3:11. Name applied to the people who lived north of the Black Sea.
 Septuagint (the seventy). The Greek Version of the Old Testament.
 Sergius Paulus, Acts 13:7. Name of the proconsul of Cyprus.
 Sheba (an oath), 2 Sam. 20:1-22. Name of queen who visited Solomon.
 Shechem (back or shoulders), Jno. 4:5. A city of Samaria.
 Shem (name), Gen. 5:32. The eldest son of Noah.
 Shiloh (place of rest), Judges 21:19. A city of Ephraim.
 Shittim (the acacias), Num. 25:1. Name of country opposite Jericho; also species of wood.
 Silas (woody), Acts 15:22. Traveling companion of Paul; same as Silvanus.
 Siloam (sent), John 9:7. Name of pool in the days of Jesus.
 Simeon (heard), Gen. 29:32. Second son of Jacob; common name among the Jews.
 Simon (hearing), Luke 4:38. Another name for Peter.
 Sinai (thorny), Ex. 19:1. Mountain where the law was given.
 Smyrna (myrrh), Rev. 2:8-11. A city of Asia Minor, situated on Aegean Sea, forty miles north of Ephesus.
 Sodom (burning), Mark 6:11. Ancient city of Syria, destroyed by fire.
 Solomon (peaceful), 2 Sam. 12:24. David's son who succeeded him to the throne.
 Sopater (savior of his father), Acts 20:4. One of the companions of Paul.
 Stephen (crown), Acts 6:5. Name of one of the seven chosen at Jerusalem; the first Christian martyr.
 Susanna (a lily). One of the women who ministered to Jesus.
 Sycamore (mulberry), Amos 7:14. A fruit tree in Palestine.
 Symeon (Simon), Acts 13:1. A teacher and prophet in the church at Antioch.
 Synagogue (congregation), Matt. 13:54. Place where the Jews met for worship.
 Syntyche (with fate), Phil. 4:2. Female member of the church at Philippi.
 Syria, Judg. 10:6. Name of country.
 Syrophenician, Mark 7:26. A mixed race of people.

T

Tabernacle (tent), Ex. 25:9. Constructed by Moses as a place of worship.
 Tabitha (gazelle), Matt. 9:25; Mark 5:41. Also called "Dorcas."
 Tares (darnel), Matt. 13:25. A weed similar to wheat in its early stages.
 Tarsus, Acts 9:11. Chief town of Cilicia, home of Paul.
 Taverns, the Three (inn), Acts 28:15. On the Appian road, where Paul lodged for a time.
 Temple, 1 Kings 7:15-22. House built by Solomon for worship.
 Ten Commandments, Ex. 34:28. The name given to the Decalogue.
 Tertullus (fr. Greek), Acts 24:1. A Roman orator.
 Tetrarch, Matt. 14:1. Name given to the governor of the fourth part of the country.

Theophilus (friend of God), Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1. Person to whom Luke wrote his Gospel and Acts of Apostles.

Thessalonica, Acts 17:2. Town in Macedonia where Paul established a church; wrote two letters to the church.

Thomas (twin), Matt. 13:55. One of the apostles.

Thyatira, Rev. 2:20. A city on the borders of Mysia.

Tiberias, John 6:1. Another name given to the Sea of Galilee.

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 21:27. Accompanied Paul to Jerusalem.

Tychicus (fateful), Acts 20:4. Companion of Paul on some of his journeys.

Tyrannus (sovereign), Acts 19:9. Paul taught in the school of Tyrannus.

Tyre (a rock), Matt. 15:21. City on the east coast of the Mediterranean.

U

Ur (light, or the moon city), Gen. 11:28. The land of Abraham's nativity.

Uriah (light of Jehovah), 2 Sam. 23:39. One of David's brave men.

Uzzah (strength), 2 Sam. 6:6. Priest who touched the ark and died.

V

Version. A translation.

Vision, Luke 2:25, 26. A revelation.

Vows, Gen. 28:18-22. A solemn promise made to God to perform or to abstain from performing a certain thing.

Vulgate, The. The Latin version of the Bible.

W

Watches of Night, 1 Sam. 11:11. The Jews divided the night into military watches instead of hours.

Wave Offering, Ex. 29:34. An offering which accompanied the peace offerings.

Way, Acts 19:9. A term used for the Gospel or Plan of Salvation.

Y

Year, Gen. 1:14. The highest division of time.

Yoke (subjection), 1 Kings 12:4. An implement for working oxen; sign of authority.

Z

Zaechaeus (pure), Luke 19:5. A tax collector, publican who lived near Jericho.

Zaehariah (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), I Chron. 24:3. Name of priest in time of David.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MAP LINK

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FIRST QUARTER
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

AIM: To lead the student through the teachings of the Gospel of John to achieve the aim as stated in John 20:31: "but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye way have life in his name."

Lesson I—January 3, 1943

THE GLORY OF THE SON OF GOD
John 1:1-14

- 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.
- 5 And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not.
- 6 There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John.
- 7 The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him.
- 8 He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light.
- 9 There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world.
- 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.

GOLDEN TEXT—"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth." (John 1:14.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Col. 1:9-18.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

December	28.	M	
December	29.	T	The Life-Giver (John 1:1-4)
December	30.	W	The Light-Giver (John 1:5-14)
December	31.	T	The Son of God (Luke 3:21, 22).
January	1.	F	The Glory of God (Luke 9:28-36)
January	2.	S	The Promise of God-(Isa. 9:1-7)
January	3.	S	The Purpose of God (Rom. 5:1-11)
			The Power of God (1 John 3:1-8)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—"In the beginning"—before time was; the time of the birth of Jesus, probably 5 B.C.; the ministry of John the Baptist probably began A.D. 27. These dates are no more than approximately correct. The following note, which may be useful to the student, shows how much chronologists differ. "The precise date of the birth Of Jesus the Christ is still disputable. The common reckoning or

Vulgar Era as devised by Abbot Dionysius Exiguus (he died about A.D. 556) was based upon the notion that Jesus was born on December 25, one week before the January 1 of the Julian year, which we call A.D. 1, thus really upon December 25 of the year 1 B.C. But no chronologist now contends that December 25 was the natal day; the only attempt is to fix the year. As Herod died in March or April of the year 4 B.C., and Matthew puts the birth of Jesus before Herod's death, the birth would fall in the still earlier part of the year 4 B.C., or in a previous year. Suffice it to say that that very learned work, *L'Art de Verifier les Dates*, puts the birth in the year 7 B.C. to make Jesus two years old at the Christmas before the death of Herod, and other chronologists have adopted the years 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 B.C., and even A.D. 1, 2, or 3, giving a range of ten years."-Bible Encyclopedia and Scriptural Dictionary. It all shows that dates are not as important as the facts recorded.

Place.—Jesus was born at Bethlehem of Judea. John the Baptist preached and bore witness concerning Jesus near the river Jordan. It is not known where John wrote his gospel.

Persons.—Jesus, John the Baptist, and the people. Our Lord Jesus Christ, whose life and works we are to study during this Quarter, was with the Father in the beginning as the Word. He was not called the Son of God till he came into the world; he was not publicly announced as the Son of God till he was baptized. Though we study him, we shall not fully comprehend him. John the Baptist, a subject of prophecy, was the forerunner of Christ. His mission was twofold; he was sent to make a people ready for Christ (Luke 1:17) and to introduce Christ to the people (John 1:29-34).

Lesson Links.—As this lesson sets forth the deity of Christ Jesus, it is vitally connected with all the other lessons of this Quarter; in truth, it is vitally connected with the whole of the New Testament, for the entire structure of Christianity is based on the grand truth that Jesus Christ is deity clothed in human nature. John affirms the existence of Christ before he took upon himself the form and substance of man. Jesus taught and performed miracles to convince the people of the truth which John sets forth in this lesson; and John declares that he wrote for that same purpose: "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.) At the time John wrote people generally knew that a man named Jesus had lived in Palestine, and that he had been crucified. It was John's purpose to show that this Jesus was the Christ.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

"The Word Was God" (Verses 1, 2)

John's first words are also the first words of Genesis—"In the beginning." "The Word was with God, and the Word was God." The connection shows that this Word was a being, a person, and not an attribute. This Word was not the Father, but Was With the Father; nor was he a mere spoken word. His nature was neither angelic, nor human, but God. That Jesus existed before the world was created is proved also by a petition in his prayer on the night of his betrayal: "And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own

self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (John 17:5.) They greatly err, therefore, who conclude that this Word, who took upon himself the nature of man and became our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, had no existence as a being before he was born of the virgin Mary. We may not be able to understand these things, but we can believe them.

The Creator and the Light of the World (Verses 3-5)

"All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made." Concerning him Paul says: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; 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. 1:15-17.) "God . . . 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.) "Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands." In the last quotation we again have the phrase "in the beginning." The quotations show that the Father made all things through the agency of the Son. The Father planned; the Son executed the plans. The Son, whom John calls the Word, was the builder. This helps us to understand to whom God was speaking in Gen. 1 when he said, "Let there be light . . . let there be a firmament," and so on, and also the significance of the plural pronoun in the expression, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." With the plain teaching that God made all things through the agency of the Son, one wonders where anyone got the idea that God just spoke things into existence.

Life and Light.—"In him was life." His life was inherent, not derived; he is the source of life. He had, and has, the power to impart life to others. "I am the resurrection, and the life." (John 11:25.) He is the source of spiritual life here and in the world to come; but the expression, "In him was life," seems here to refer to the life which he imparted to created beings. It is certain that nothing originated its own life. From the life in him comes our spiritual life and light. "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.) "And the light shineth in the darkness." Light dispels darkness; yet a person may shut himself off even from the light of the sun; and so may he shut himself off from the light that comes from Jesus. Ignorance is darkness, and there is such a thing as willful ignorance, willful spiritual blindness. Sin is darkness. The world was in darkness when Jesus came, the darkness of ignorance and sin; he brought life, "and the darkness apprehended it not," did not seize the light he brought—they rejected the light. "Men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil." Such people harden their hearts, stop their ears, and close their eyes, because they want neither to hear nor to see that which is intended to lead them out of darkness into the healing light of the gospel of Christ. (Matt. 13:15.) A man sins against himself and all people over whom he has influence, when he closes his eyes against the light of the Lord.

John Came for Witness (Verses 6-9)

"There came a man, sent from God." The power of God enabled Zacharias and Elisabeth to become parents when they were old. The child was named John. He was a subject of prophecy. Compare Isa. 40:3, 4 with Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:2, 3; Luke 3:3-6. He came not only to prepare a way for the Lord, but also that he might bear witness that Jesus was the expected Messiah, the true light, "that all might believe through him." John did bear witness. On the morrow after John was Questioned by a delegation sent from Jerusalem by the Pharisees, "he seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man who is become before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, for this cause came I baptizing in water. And John bare witness, saying, I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize in water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit. And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." (John 1:29-34.)

The True Light.—Jesus is the true light, which lighteth every man coming into the world. Jesus came into the world as a light for every man, just as he came to be a Savior for every man. He is neither the light nor the Savior to the willfully blind and perverse. Jesus himself shows the extent and the limitation of his light: "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me may not abide in the darkness." (John 12:46.)

"The World Knew Him Not" (Verses 10-13)

Jesus was a stranger to the world which he made; the world of men that he made did not know him, and even now does not know him. "He came unto his own [Greek, own things], and they that were his own [People] received him not." Too limited a view has been taken of the verses of this section of our lesson; they cover a longer period of time than the few years of Christ's personal ministry. John wrote long after the personal ministry of Christ had ended—long after Christ had ascended into heaven and been crowned king. At the time he wrote people all over the known world had either accepted or rejected Christ as their Savior and king—most of them had rejected him. John was writing about the world's attitude toward Christ, and not merely the attitude of the Jews toward him during his personal ministry. Even after the gospel had been preached in its fullness, the people generally both Jews and Gentiles —rejected him. But wherever the gospel was preached, "as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name." Notice the present tense—believe, not believed. John was speaking of a present truth, not of a past fact. The mission of Jesus embraced the whole world. "Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Tim. 1:15.) He came to save Gentiles as well as Jews. And as many as obeyed the gospel were born again—became children of God. The Gentiles who believed had that right extended to them. The greater part of the

Jews depended on their Jewish blood, but under Christ that avails nothing. A man cannot formulate his own plan and will himself into being a child of God; only the will of God, the gospel of Christ, can make one a child of God. In Christ Jesus we are sons of God. "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." (Gal. 3:26, 27.)

"We Beheld His Glory" (Verse 14)

"The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." He took upon himself the nature of man; he was God manifested in the flesh. Deity appeared in a human body. He was of the seed of David according to the flesh. (Rom. 1:3.) "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. 2:14, 15.) The Son of God, being also the Son of man, dwelt among us. "And we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father." Peter, James, and John saw his glory on the mount of transfiguration. All saw his glory in his teaching, in his character, and in the mighty works which he did. "This beginning of his signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory." (John 2:11.) And they saw also that he was full of grace and truth. By grace people are saved; by truth they are enlightened.

SOME REFLECTIONS

We cannot understand the unity and relations of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; but we can believe what the Bible says of them.

We cannot understand how deity and humanity united in the person of Jesus, but we can believe that such a union existed.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit in creation.
John the Baptist.
The baptism of Jesus.
Acceptable faith.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give the time, and discuss the mistake in chronology.

Give place and persons.

Give some discussion of the persons.

In what way is the present lesson connected with all other lessons?

Verses 1, 2

Discuss the pre-existence of Christ.

Verses 3-5

Discuss the part the Word—the Son of God—had in the creation.

"In him was life"—what does this expression mean?

Give proof that Jesus is the source of spiritual light.

Who are in darkness, and why?

Verses 6-9

Who were the parents of John the Baptist?

Why was he called the Baptist?

What prophecy was fulfilled in him?

What witness did he bear concerning Jesus?

How did he know Jesus to be the expected Messiah?

Verses 10-13

To what and to whom did Jesus come?

To whom did he give a right to become sons of God? 10-13.

Do you think this passage is limited to the personal ministry of Christ? **Verse 14**

Discuss the meaning and application of verses 10-13. Discuss the reflections.

Lesson II—January 10, 1943

JESUS INSTRUCTS A GREAT TEACHER

John 3:1-16

- 1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:
- 2 The same came unto him by night, and said to him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him.
- 3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
- 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?
- 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
- 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
- 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew.
- 8 The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.
- 9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?
- 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou the teacher of Israel, and understandest not these things?
- 11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.
- 12 If I told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?
- 13 And no one hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven.
- 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up;
- 15 That whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life.
- 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.

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.—1 John 3:1-10.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

January 4.	M	The Birth from Above (John 3:1-13)
January 5.	T	The Faith That Saves (John 3:14-18)
January 6.	W	Life for a Look (Num. 21:4-9)
January 7.	T	Begotten of God (1 John 5:1-5)
January 8.	F	The End of Your Faith (1 Pet. 1:3-9)
January 9.	S	Love Redeeming and Reconciling (2 Cor. 5:14-21)
January 10.	S	"Learn of Me" (Matt. 11:25-30)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—According to Usher, A.D. 27; according to Hales, A.D. 28. Hales' date is more likely to be true; for, according to both, Jesus was baptized A.D. 27. That must have been during the warm, dry season of the year; for as John preached and baptized in the open

country, he must have done the major part of his baptizing in the warm, dry season. After Jesus was baptized, he spent forty days in the wilderness, and it does not seem reasonable that this was in the winter. But as the Passover came about the breaking up of the rainy season in early spring, Jesus must have been baptized the year before. As the conversation with Nicodemus took place while Jesus was attending the Passover, it must have been in the spring of A.D. 28.

Place.—Jerusalem. To acquaint himself with this most interesting city, the capital city of the Jews, the student should consult an encyclopedia, a Bible dictionary, or a book of travels in Palestine.

Persons.—Jesus and Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a member of the Sanhedrin, the high court of the Jews. Evidently he was not so stiff and self-righteous as other leaders in Jerusalem.

Lesson Links.—It must have been after the temptations of Jesus that he returned to the place where John was baptizing, at which time John pointed him out as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. The two disciples who heard John say this followed Jesus. At this time Jesus gathered a few other disciples about him, and then went up into Galilee. While in Galilee he and his disciples attended a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and there he performed his first miracle. After this he spent a short time in Capernaum before going to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of the Passover. While in Jerusalem, perhaps before the feast day, he drove the traffickers out of the temple, and charged them, "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise." "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, during the feast, many believed on his name, beholding his signs which he did."

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Nicodemus' Opinion of Jesus (Verses 1, 2)

Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a member of the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was more than a high court, for it ruled the Jews. Only three times is Nicodemus mentioned, and each time by John. Once, in seeking to prevent the Sanhedrin's hasty condemnation of Jesus, he said to the court, "Doth OUT law judge a man, except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth?" (John 7:51.) He also assisted Joseph in the burial of Jesus. (John 19:38-40.) Early in the ministry of Jesus his teaching and miracles made a favorable impression on Nicodemus, and he therefore sought this interview with Jesus. Why did he come to Jesus by night? We are not told; but it is more in keeping with what we know of him to conclude that he came by night so as to have a Quiet talk with Jesus, which he could not have by day when the crowds were pressing upon Jesus. Nicodemus knew of the miracles of Jesus, perhaps had seen some of them; he was therefore prepared to speak very positively to Jesus: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God." Rabbi, a term of honor among the Jews, was conferred upon distinguished teachers of the law. It literally signified my master. Whether Nicodemus included the other members of the court when he said, "We know," is a matter of conjecture. He perhaps meant to include everyone who was acquainted with the miracles of Jesus. By the expression, "a teacher come from God," he meant a teacher whom God had sent, an inspired teacher, and not one appointed by

man, as were the teachers among the Jews. Nicodemus was thoughtful enough to recognize the genuineness of the signs which Jesus did, and to know that no man of his own ability could do such works. He knew therefore that JESUS was a teacher sent from God. He knew what all religious people of today should know, namely, that miracles could be performed only by men whom God had sent on a special mission; to Nicodemus these miracles were signs that God was with the teacher, that the teacher represented God. Not all miracles were signs, but only those wrought in connection with a man's teaching, to give the people assurance that the teacher was teaching the truth, the word of God.

Ye Must Be Both Again (Verses 3-7)

When we consider the importance of this interview and the importance of the subject discussed, it is reasonable to conclude that John gives us a very condensed report of this conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus. It seems that something, not reported, led up to the Lord's statement: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "verily, verily," introduces a solemn affirmation. The state of Nicodemus' mind required a solemn affirmation to impress him; for, like all other Jews, he would think that his being a Jew would give him a place in the kingdom which they expected. Something therefore must have been said about the expected kingdom, and the place of the Jews in that kingdom. Jesus would give him to understand at once that his being a Jew would count for nothing in his favor. "Except one"—any one—the greatest as well as the lowest, the Jew as well as the Gentile. To Nicodemus it must have been a startling statement—a son of Abraham, a high official in God's chosen nation, must be born again, or he cannot see the kingdom of God! To see the kingdom is to enjoy its blessings. As the child is born into the kingdom of nature, so are people born into the kingdom of God. To be born again is the only way to enter the kingdom of God. Because Nicodemus had his mind on the natural birth, the language of Jesus greatly puzzled him.

The New Birth.—Theologians have made such a mystery of the new birth that many people have been so confused that they have made no effort to become children of God. It is plain that Jesus put the responsibility of the new birth on Nicodemus. It is also plain that the new birth puts one into the kingdom of God; he passes out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Because in becoming a Christian he enters into a new life, a person is said to be born again. Various terms are used to designate the act of changing from sinner to saint, such as conversion, turning again, creation, making alive, and so on. If we would have any clear idea as to what it means to be born again, or to be made alive, or to turn again, we must not attach a meaning to either term that will contradict the other terms. To be born and to be created literally are very different processes, yet both terms are applied to the process of becoming a Christian. When a thing is literally created it is not literally born; yet the change in becoming a Christian is so great that it may be figuratively called a creation or a birth. It is also a turning again. He who said, "Ye must be born anew," said also, "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." Hence, to understand, to turn, and be healed is the same as to be born again. The apostles never told inquiring sinners, "Ye must be born again," but told them plainly what to do to be saved. This of course was after they began to preach under the Great Commission, which said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." To be saved is to be born again. Hence by seeing what the apostles preached and what the people did to become Christians under their preaching, you learn what it is to be born again. It is the spirit of man that is born anew.

Is the New Birth a Mystery? (Verses 8-12)

Many people think that verse eight shows the new birth to be a great mystery, which no one can understand; but it seems that Jesus expected Nicodemus to understand it. "Art thou the teacher of Israel, and understandest not these things?" said Jesus. He should have known that Jesus was speaking figuratively, and not urging a man to undergo another physical birth. But Jesus was not explaining in the eighth verse what the new birth is, but that a man when he is old can be born again. Notice the last clause: "So is every one that is born of the Spirit." He does not say, "So is every one born of the Spirit." He is talking about the one that is born, and not how he is born. You cannot see the wind, but you know it blows by observing or experiencing its effects. You cannot see a man's spirit, but you know a man has a spirit by observing or experiencing its effects. It is the spirit in man that is born anew. Nicodemus still did not understand. "How can these things be?" His wrong ideas about the kingdom were in the way of his understanding. He, with all other Jews, expected a material kingdom, and that all Jews would be citizens of it by virtue of their fleshly birth. They thought the kingdom would be a Jewish kingdom, and that the Jews would rule the earth. Now to be told that he and all others must be born again to enter the kingdom which he thought would be his by blood right was beyond his understanding. To put Nicodemus in a more teachable mood, Jesus said to him, "Art thou the teacher of Israel, and understandest not these things?" When a man continues to raise objections to a proposition of which he is ignorant, no one can teach him till he is made to realize his ignorance. If Nicodemus had not believed what Jesus said about things that take place here on earth, he would not believe if he told him of heavenly things. Hence there was nothing to be gained by telling him about his future reign on a throne in heaven.

In studying this lesson, we must not overlook the truth that the kingdom had not then been established, and that no one could be born into it before it was established. Nicodemus could not at that time have been born into the kingdom of Christ. Jesus was seeking to set before him the spiritual nature of his kingdom when established.

"God So Loved the World" (Verses 13-17)

It seems that commentators have had a lot of unnecessary trouble with verse thirteen. Why not take a common sense view, namely, that the words of Jesus to Nicodemus ended with verse twelve, and

that verses 13-21 are the words of John the writer? Jesus had not ascended to heaven and was not in the bosom of the Father while he was talking to Nicodemus; but he had ascended when John wrote. Verses fourteen and fifteen refer to an incident recorded in Num. 21:4-9. The Israelites were not pleased with their lot, "and the people spake against God, and against Moses." To punish them, "Jehovah sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died." Instead of taking away the serpents as the people had requested, Jehovah had Moses to make a serpent of brass and erect it on a standard, with the following provisional promise: "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he seeth it, shall live." In like manner Jesus was lifted up on the cross, "that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life." If any refused to look at the serpent of brass, he died; if any refuses to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, he perishes. The expression, "lifted up," refers to his being lifted up on the cross. God's love prompted the giving of his Son to be "lifted up." "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. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13.) "But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8.) God's love was without limit—he so loved that he gave his only begotten Son, making it possible for all men to be saved. The "whosoever" includes all men who will by faith accept salvation through Christ Jesus. It shows the world-wide plan of salvation through Christ. Even after the gospel began to be preached, some time elapsed before the early Christians, including the apostles, realized that the gospel was for all men. At the house of Cornelius Peter 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." Peter had not seen this before. God so loved that he gave, and we must so love that we give ourselves in his service.

SOME REFLECTIONS

We must not put such a construction on figurative language as to contradict plain passages. We must not hide behind a figurative expression as an excuse for not obeying a plain command.

Jesus came to save sinners, not to cause men to become sinners. They were sinners before he came; and they would have continued to be hopeless sinners had not Jesus come. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost, not to cause men to be lost.

So many people like mysteries. They like to make mysteries out of the new birth, the new creation, and they wonder how a dead sinner can do anything to become a Christian; and all this in the face of the plain teaching as to what men did to be saved.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The Jewish high court, the Sanhedrin.

How the conversions in the Acts show what the new birth is.

The brazen serpent—what lesson to us.

Words used to describe the process of becoming Christians.

Jesus came to save, not to condemn.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Discuss the time.

Discuss the feast Jesus was attending.

Give in their order the events between last lesson and this.

Verses 1, 2

Give facts about Nicodemus.

What did he know about miracles as signs?

Discuss miracles as signs.

Verses 3-7

What startling thing did Jesus say to Nicodemus?

What ideas did the Jews have about the expected kingdom?

Give other words used to describe the process of becoming Christians.

Discuss the danger of overstressing figures of

Lesson III—January 17, 1943

JESUS WINNING SOULS

John 4:27-42

speech.

How find out what people do in being born again?

Verses 8-12

Discuss verse 8.

What is born again?

Why did the whole matter puzzle Nicodemus?

Verses 13-17

Why does it seem that the speech of Jesus ended at verse 12?

Tell about Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness.

What application does Jesus make of this incident?

Repeat and discuss verses 13-17.

In what way is God's love greater than man's?

Discuss the "whosoever."

Discuss the reflections.

27 And upon this came his disciples; and they marveled that he was speaking with a woman; yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why speakest thou with her?

28 So the woman left her waterpot, and went away into the city, and saith to the people,

29 Come, see a man, who told me all things that ever I did: can this be the Christ?

30 They went out of the city, and were coming to him.

31 In the mean while the disciples prayed him, saying, Rabbi, eat.

32 But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not.

33 The disciples therefore said one to another, Hath any man brought him aught to eat?

34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work.

35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest.

36 He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

37 For herein is the saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.

38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye have not labored: others have labored, and ye are entered into their labor.

39 And from that city many of the Samaritans believed on him because of the word of the woman, who testified, He told me all things that ever I did.

40 So when the Samaritans came unto him, they besought him to abide with them: and he abode there two days.

41 And many more believed because of his word;

42 And they said to the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy speaking for we have heard for ourselves and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world.

GOLDEN TEXT—"He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal." (John 4:36.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—2 Cor. 5:14-20.
ANNUAL LESSON COMMENTARY

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

January 11.	M	Attention and Awakening (John 4:5-15)
January 12.	T	Conviction and Conversion (John 4:16-26)
January 13.	W	Fields White to Harvest (John 4:27-33)
January 14.	T	The Saviour Among the Samaritans (John 4:39-42)
January 15.	F	Winning Individuals to Christ (John 1:35-42)
January 16.	S	Winning Crowds to Christ (Acts 2:36-41)
January 17.	S	Winning the World to Christ (Matt. 28:16-20)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—A.D. 28 is the most likely date. See time in last lesson. At the time Jesus visited Sychar it was yet four months to the harvest. It was therefore about the middle of December, for the harvest began about the middle of April. About eight months had passed since the events of the previous lesson.

Place.—Sychar, a city of Samaria, about forty miles north of Jerusalem. This is generally understood to be the ancient Shechem, now called Nablus. It apparently was one of the most ancient cities of Canaan. It was located in the narrow pass between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, where Joshua read the law to the assembled tribes of Israel. (Josh. 8:30-35.) Later Jeroboam made this city his capital city after Israel revolted from Rehoboam. (1 Kings 12:25.) On Mount Gerizim stood the temple of the Samaritans.

Persons.—Jesus, his disciples, the Samaritan woman, and the people of Sychar. These people were, of course, Samaritans. When Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, conquered the kingdom of the ten tribes of Israel, it seems that he carried the entire population into captivity. He then sent colonies into the country from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Harnath, and Sepharvaim. (2 Kings 17:6, 23, 24.) Apparently the only Jewish blood in the Samaritans came through a few priests of the captives who were sent back at the request of these colonies to teach them the manner "of the god of the land." From the days of Nehemiah great enmity had existed between the Jews and the Samaritans.

Lesson Links.—After the conversation with Nicodemus, which we studied in the previous lesson, Jesus went out into the country of Judaea, and spent some time in teaching and baptizing. (John 3:22.) Jesus baptized through the agency of his disciples. "When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples), he left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs pass through Samaria." (John 4:1-4.) When he arrived at Jacob's well, being weary with his journey, he sat down for rest, most likely on the well's curbing. His disciples went into the city to buy food; and in the meantime a woman came out from the city to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me to drink." This request for a favor would do much toward putting the woman in a favorable attitude toward Jesus, for Jews ordinarily would ask no favors of a Samaritan. The Jews would engage in business transactions with the Samaritans, as is shown by the fact that the disciples made no protest against going into the city to buy food; but they would have no social relations with them. Surprised at the request of Jesus for a drink, the woman asked, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a Samaritan woman?" Jesus told her, that if she had known who it was that asked for a drink, she would have asked, and he would

have given her living water. The student will please read carefully the rest of the conversation between Jesus and the woman.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Woman Tells About Jesus (Verses 27-29)

Before the woman left the well, the disciples returned from the city. With their Jewish prejudices it is not strange that they marveled that Jesus was talking with the woman; but they considerably refrained from asking any questions. In her haste to make her report in the city, the woman left her waterpot at the well. It is likely that Jesus told her more than is reported, but she evidently exaggerated when she said to the people of the city, "Come, see a man, who told me all things that ever I did." But Jesus had told her enough about herself to convince her that he knew all about her. But she was still not quite convinced that he was what he had told her he was. In the twenty-fifth and the twenty-sixth verses we have this part of the conversation: "The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh (he that is called Christ): when he is come, he will declare unto us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he." As the Samaritans rejected all the Old Testament excepting the first five books, one wonders where this woman got the idea about the Messiah. Of course some statements were made that we, in the light of later developments, can see referred to the Messiah. But the form of the question in the Greek shows that she really expected a negative answer to her question, "Can this be the Christ?" Yet she did recognize him as a prophet, if no more.

The Master's Food (Verses 30-34)

The words of the woman made a great impression on the people in the city. Her desire to quickly tell the people about Jesus, and her boldness in doing so, together with the readiness of the people to accept her word, rather indicates that she was not the type of woman she is so generally pictured to have been. All her marital relations may have been legitimate, and she may have been merely espoused to the man she then had, -and the marriage had not then been consummated. At least, the people readily accepted her word, and rushed out of the city to see him. "In the mean while the disciples prayed him, saying, Rabbi, eat." They knew that he was exhausted from the journey; they had brought food from the city; why then did he delay eating? "I have meat to eat that ye know not." The disciples had their mind on material food—food for the body. They therefore wondered how he came into possession of food. Their question was therefore perfectly natural. It is likely also that Jesus had become so absorbed in his effort to lead the woman into the light that all sense of hunger had vanished. If some intense emotion was aroused in you at a time when you were hungry, you know how such emotion can quickly banish the sense of hunger. Jesus explained the food he had: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work." "For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (John 6:38.) With him the will of the Father was supreme. Even in the hour of agony in the Garden of Geth-

semene, he said, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." Here is submission, obedience, faithfulness, even unto death. And that must be the determined aim of every follower of the Christ. The phrase, "And to accomplish his work," is a significant expression. He came to accomplish a certain work, the work of the Father. Some tell us that he came to set up a world kingdom and to sit upon the throne of David in the city of Jerusalem; but it is argued that, because the Jews rejected him, he did not set up his kingdom. If that be so, he failed to do what he came to do. Yet he himself, on the night of his betrayal, said, "I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do." (John 17:4.)

Fields Ready for the Harvest (Verse 35)

In the parable of the good seed and the tares, "the harvest" refers to the disposing of the good and the bad at the end of the world, but here it evidently refers to the gathering people into the service of Christ. His statement that there "are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest," refers to the harvest of their grain, and shows us approximately the time of year of this incident. It is likely that the people coming out to him from the city were already visible when he said to the disciples, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest." The people of that city were ready to be gathered into his fellowship. But this by no means proves that all fields are "white unto harvest." A community is not ripe for harvest if it is set against the gospel; it is not "white unto harvest" simply because it needs the gospel. We have not the insight into hearts that Jesus had; we cannot know that a community is ready for harvest till we preach the gospel in that community. Jesus informs us that some communities would not be ready for his teaching. "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, as ye go forth out of that house or that city, shake off the dust of your feet." (Matt. 10:14.)

"One Soweth, and Another Reapeth" (Verses 36-38)

Wages are paid to the man who does your reaping. That is a principle that Jesus here applies to spiritual things. The one that reaps a harvest of souls for the master "gathereth fruit unto life eternal." Notice that "fruit" is here singular; it must refer to the building up of a character that fits one for life eternal. Peter's language in the first part of the first chapter of his second letter supports this idea. After mentioning the things that must be added to our character so that we "may become partakers of the divine nature," he adds, "for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

"One soweth, and another reapeth." In gospel successes the sower, as well as the reaper, performs an essential work; for there could be no reaping without the sowing; however in the eyes of men the reaper seems to be doing the greatest work. Even so, the sower should rejoice with the reaper at a successful harvest of souls. Sometimes a few days of successful reaping is the result of a long period of patient sowing. For this reason the sower generally requires more patience than does the reaper. The sower may be

doing effective work; but he cannot know that he is doing so till he sees the results in the reaping. He should not be discouraged; he is doing his duty, even if the seed falls on unresponsive soil. "Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it, until it receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; establish your hearts." (James 5:7, 8.) "In your patience ye shall win your souls." (Luke 21:19.) The past tenses of verbs in verse 38 make the language somewhat puzzling; for, so far as the record shows, he had not sent them on any mission at that time. Sometimes future events that were certain to occur were spoken of as if they had already occurred; this is especially true in prophetic language. All good men of the past, especially the prophets, including John the Baptist, had been preparing the way for the work the apostles were to do.

By Invitation Jesus Visits Sychar (Verses 39-42)

It seems that the people of Sychar had full confidence in the word of the woman; for, because of her word, many believed on him. And because of this, they besought him to abide with them. During his two-days' stay with them, "many more believed because of his word." His teaching further confirmed them in their belief in him; "and they said to the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy speaking: for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world." It seems that no miracles were wrought in that city. None were needed; for when people accept a man for what he claims to be, no miracles are needed to substantiate his claims. Healing miracles were never wrought merely for the relief of human sufferings. If that had been the purpose of miraculous healings, God could cause that there be no sickness, or human suffering of any sort. If this truth could be stamped on the minds of the people, there would not be so many pretended healings. The student should notice that the people of this city were made believers by words. Some believed on the word of the woman; others believed when they heard Jesus. No other force was brought to bear on them to make them believers in the Lord. They heard him, and therefore knew that he was indeed the Savior of the world.

SOME REFLECTIONS

In the conversation at Jacob's well, the woman brought up the matter of worship. Jesus informed her that there would be no sacred places for worship, but that people must worship in spirit and in truth. To worship in spirit is to enter into the spirit—the heart must be in it. Mere formality is not sufficient, no matter how correct the form may be. Praise is not acceptable if it is mere lip service. Nothing is acceptable if it is done to be seen of men. Also men must worship in truth; that is, they must worship according to truth. The following shows the necessity of the right spirit and the right form of worship and service: "But they flattered him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongue. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they faithful in his covenant." (Psalm 78:36, 37.) "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. 15:8, 9.)

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The Samaritans—their origin and worship.
 How to worship God today.
 How are people made believers in Christ?
 Discuss verse 35 of our lesson.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Give evidence that Jesus accomplished his Father's work.

Lesson Settings

Discuss the time, place, and persons.

Give the movements of Jesus between the previous lesson and this one.

Tell about his conversation with the woman at Jacob's well.

Verses 27-29

Discuss the woman's report in the city, and its effect.

Verses 30-34

Why had the disciples gone into the city?

Why was Jesus not ready to eat when they returned?

What did Jesus say about his meat?

Give other passages showing his submission to the will of the Father.

Verse 35

Discuss verse 35; when is a field "white already unto harvest"?

Verses 36-38

Who gathers fruit unto life eternal, and what is that fruit?

Discuss verses 37, 38.

Verses 39-42

How came Jesus to visit Sychar, and with what results?

What caused the people to believe?

Are people made believers any other way than by hearing the word?

Why was it not necessary for Jesus to perform miracles in Sychar?

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IV—January 24, 1943

JESUS THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

John 5:2-17

2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porches.

3 In these lay a multitude of them that were sick, blind, halt, withered.

5 And a certain man was there, who had been thirty and eight years in his infirmity.

6 When Jesus saw him lying, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wouldest thou be made whole?

7 The sick man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

8 Jesus saith unto him, Arise, take up thy bed, and walk.

9 And straightway the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked. Now it was the sabbath on that day.

10 So the Jews said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath, and it is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed.

11 But he answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

12 They asked him, Who is the man that said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?

13 But he that was healed knew not who it was; for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in the place.

14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee.

15 The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him whole.

16 And for this cause the Jews persecuted Jesus, because he did these things on the sabbath.

17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh even until now, and I work.

GOLDEN TEXT "Wouldest thou be made whole?" (John 5:6.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 116:1-8.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

January 18.	M	Healer of the Body (John 5:2-9)
January 19.	T	Saviour of the Soul (John 5:9-18)
January 20.	W	Calling the Great Physician (Luke 18:35-43)
January 21.	T	Rejecting the Great Physician (Matt. 8:28-34)
January 22.	F	Trusting the Great Physician (Mark 9:17-27)
January 23.	S	Honoring the Great Physician (Luke 17:11-19)
January 24.	S	"Who Healeth All Thy Diseases" (Psalm 103:1-5)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 29. If we could determine what feast Jesus was attending at the time the incidents of this lesson occurred, we could be reasonably sure as to the time. (See verse one.) It seems that most of the commentators and critics understand it to be the Passover, the second Passover of the public ministry of Jesus.

Place.—Jerusalem, where all the great feasts of the Jews were held.

Persons.—Jesus, the helpless man, and the critics of Jesus.

Lesson Links.—Our last lesson left Jesus at Sychar. "And after the two days he went forth from thence into Galilee." "so when he came into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did in Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast? He soon visited Cana, where he had performed his first miracle, the turning water into wine. Here a certain nobleman came to him from Capernaum, and besought him to come down and heal his son, who was at the point of death. Jesus said to him, "Go thy way; thy son liveth." The son was healed in that hour. Jesus had performed other miracles, but this was the second miracle he performed at Cana of Galilee. "After these things there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." This seems to have been the Passover, the second Passover Jesus attended after he began his public ministry.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Sheep Gate, and the Pool Called Bethesda (Verses 2, 3)

When Nehemiah rebuilt the wall around Jerusalem, among the several gates built in the wall was one called the sheepgate. (Neh. 3:1, 32; 12:39.) By this gate was the pool Bethesda, the waters of which were regarded by the people as having healing power. Connected with it were five porches to shelter those who came to be healed. In these porches were a multitude of people afflicted with various ailments. Many critics consider the latter part of the third verse and the entire fourth verse as an interpolation. The American Standard Version leaves that portion out of the text, but has this note: "Many ancient authorities insert, wholly or in part, waiting for the moving of the water: for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole, with whatsoever disease he was holden." This seems to fit in with the narrative, and to give force and meaning to verse seven.

A Miracle of Healing (Verses 5-8)

Among the multitude of sick and helpless people was a man who had been in his infirmity thirty-eight years. If Jesus healed more than the one, nothing is said about it. Perhaps Jesus selected the one man because his condition was such, and he was so well-known as a helpless man, that no one could dispute that a real miracle had been performed. When Jesus went to that pool on a Sabbath day, he knew what he would find, and what he would do. If Jesus healed any of the others that were there, then this one case is mentioned because of its outstanding character. But it seems that other cures would have been mentioned, had others been healed. It all shows that Jesus healed people, not simply to relieve suffering, but to convince the people that he was sent from God. Had he been healing people merely to relieve suffering, he would have healed all the sick in the world at that time and on down the ages. He did not have to be present to effect a cure. He could even cause that there be no sickness or infirmities of any kind. He had a definite purpose in performing miracles. The man must have thought it strange for Jesus, a stranger to him, to ask, "Wouldest thou be made whole?" for he was there for that purpose. However had Jesus cured him without saying anything, no one, not even the man himself, would have known whence the power came. The people would have been astonished, but not enlightened; no one would have known that God was working through Jesus. But the question Jesus asked would gain the attention of the man, and also of the people. The man did not give a direct answer to the question, but stated his difficulty in getting into the water. He was so afflicted that he could move but slowly, and he had no one to help him into the water. Always some one stepped into the water before him. It seems from this statement of his difficulty, that there was a notion that only one cure could be effected after each troubling of the water. But the man was persistent. Thirty-eight years he had suffered, and still had hope. What is stated in the verse omitted from the text is implied in verse seven. Whether the people were right or wrong in their belief about the curative power of the waters of this pool is of no special importance to us. The point of interest to us is this miracle of healing. In a very striking way it showed the power of Jesus over disease. Perhaps nothing else could have so astonished the man and the people who heard as the command of Jesus: "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk." But strength and courage to try came to him with the command; "and straightway the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked." And so his long desire for health and strength was gratified in a way he had never dreamed of. But Jesus is able to save the sinner from a worse affliction than that which afflicted this man, and does so when the sinner promptly obeys the Lord's command, as did this afflicted man. Jesus came to seek the lost, died to save sinners, and "became unto all them that the author of eternal salvation." Jesus is the physician of souls, but people must desire release from sin before they will come to him. They may come with this assurance: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

It Was on a Sabbath Day (Verses 9-11)

The law of the Sabbath required the Jews to keep the Sabbath holy, and not to do any work on that day; but the law did not

prohibit deeds of mercy on that day. But the Jews in their long history had added numerous requirements, which were called the tradition of the elders. They claimed that these requirements had been delivered orally by Moses; and up to the time of our lesson they had never been put into writing, but had been transmitted by word of mouth to each succeeding generation. The Jews held that these traditions were more binding than the written law. So wedded to them were they that Jesus said, "Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men. And he said unto them, Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition." (Mark 7:8, 9.) Their tradition prohibited all efforts to heal people on the Sabbath, or to carry anything on that day. Hence when the Jews saw the man carrying his bed, which would be nothing more than a light pallet, they said, "It is the sabbath, and it is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed." By the term Jews, John usually meant the authorities in Jerusalem. It was therefore some of the rulers who charged the man with breaking the law of the Sabbath. It is likely that the man himself recognized the tradition of the elders as binding; hence the only defense he had was, "He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk." Jesus would not have told the man to do a thing that would violate the law of Moses; that would have been telling a man to sin, for the law of Moses was still in force.

The Man Knew Not Who Healed Him (Verses 12, 13)

The Jews were not satisfied with the answer the man gave them. They wanted more information; and they had no good purpose in seeking that information, even though they blindly thought they had. In their estimation the tradition of the elders had been violated, and they wanted to find the man who was guilty of the crime of healing a man on the Sabbath. That a man had been practically helpless for the long period of thirty-eight years was no concern of theirs. They did not stop to reason that only the power of God could have wrought such a miracle. It evidently did not occur to them that the one who did the healing had effectively practiced the law given in Lev. 19:18: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." There is one peculiar thing about this miracle of healing. In other miraculous healings some degree of faith was manifested; but in this case the man healed did not so much as know who healed him. "But he that was healed knew not who it was; for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in the place."

The Man Later Learns Who Healed Him (Verses 14, 15)

"Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple." This language indicates that Jesus sought him out. He had an important admonition for him: "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee." Is there not a hint here that the man had brought his afflictions on himself by indulging in sin? Jesus had not cautioned this man to tell no one, as he did on some other occasions. But if the man knew the attitude of the Jews (Jewish authorities) toward Jesus, he did a very ungenerous thing by going at once to them to tell them who had made him whole.

The Jews Persecute Jesus (Verses 16, 17)

Jesus honored the law of Moses, but he had no regard for the tradition of the elders. Because he did a good deed on the Sabbath, they persecuted him. He made himself more of a criminal in their sight when he said, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." The Jews understood him to mean that God was his Father in a special sense, in a sense that put him on an equality with God. Believing him to be a mere man, they regarded such claim as blasphemy. They therefore had grounds, as they thought, for two charges against him—Sabbath breaking and blasphemy. (See verse 18.) If a person was guilty of either crime, he would have been subject to the death penalty. God rested from his work of creation on the seventh day, but he did not become idle; his work of operating and preserving his creation has continued day and night, seven days in the week, even until now. Necessary works, and works of mercy, were not prohibited on the Sabbath. The Jews recognized this in part, for they watered and fed their domestic animals on the Sabbath. It is strange that they allowed on the Sabbath deeds of mercy to a domestic animal, but thought Jesus committed a great sin in showing mercy to a man who had been practically helpless for a period of thirty-eight years. Jesus violated no law of God in making the man whole; he was without sin. The opposition of the Jews to Jesus grew out of their ignorance; and their own notions and their devotion to their traditions kept them from learning the truth. On the cross Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." In his second sermon in Jerusalem Peter said, "And now, brethren, I know that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." And Paul, in a sermon at Antioch of Pisidia, said, "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." Their ignorance was not due to a lack of available evidence and information; they stopped their ears and closed their eyes, because they did not want to know.

SOME REFLECTIONS

We should not be much surprised that the Jews adhered so tenaciously to the tradition of the elders, so long as there are members of the church today who refuse to obey a plain command of God unless they can obey it in the way to which they have been accustomed. Custom becomes more sacred to some people than Holy Writ.

Jesus healed the sick and the lame, and fed the hungry; but that was not the end and aim of his coming to earth. He came to heal the sin-sick soul, and to feed those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. His miracles of healing proved that he was from God, and was able to do what he came to do. As most of the miracles were miracles of mercy and helpfulness, they served a twofold purpose; they not only showed that God was with him, but also that his mission was a mission of mercy and helpfulness.

Some miracles were signs; some were not. When a miracle was wrought through the agency of some prophet or preacher, it was a sign of God's presence with him. But when God created the heavens and the earth, it was not a sign of anything to anybody; yet all these acts of creation were great miracles. We can confidently affirm that

signs have ceased, that is, signs wrought through the agency of men; but it is too much to say that all miracles have ceased. We have every assurance that the dead will be raised, and that will certainly be a great miracle, but will not be done as a sign to anybody about anything. And then when the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, what a miracle that will be, but it will not be done as a sign that God is with some preacher. Signs have ceased—ceased because they have served their purpose.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The mission of Christ a mission of mercy and helpfulness.
The enmity of the Pharisees toward Jesus.
How Jesus denounced the Pharisees.
Miracles in general, and miracles as signs.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give the time, place, and persons.
Give movements of Jesus between last lesson and this one.

Verses 2, 3

Discuss the gates to Jerusalem.
Give facts about the pool Bethesda.

Verses 5-8

Tell about the miracle of healing.
Why would Jesus ask the man, "Wouldest thou be made whole?"
Discuss Jesus as the healer of souls.

Verses 9-11

Give the law of the Sabbath.

What had the Jews added to the law of Moses?
How strongly wedded were the Jews to these added requirements?
What did the Jews say to the healed man?

Verses 12, 13

Discuss verses 12, 13.
In what particular was Jesus obeying the law in healing the man?

Verses 14, 15

Discuss verses 14, 15.

Verses 16, 17

What did Jesus say about his Father?
What two complaints did the Jews now make against Jesus?
Why did the Jews persecute Jesus?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson V—January 31, 1943

JESUS THE BREAD OF LIFE

John 6:8-14, 30-35

- 8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,
9 There is a lad here, who hath five barley loaves, and two fishes: but what are these among so many?
10 Jesus said, Make the people sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.
11 Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down; likewise also of the fishes as much as they would.
12 And when they were filled, he saith unto his disciples, Gather up the broken pieces which remain over, that nothing be lost.
13 So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with broken pieces from the five barley loaves which remained over unto them that had eaten.
14 When therefore the people saw the sign which he did, they said, This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world.
30 They said therefore unto him, What then doest thou for a sign, that we may see, and believe thee? what workest thou?

31 Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.

32 Jesus therefore said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, It was not Moses that gave you the bread out of heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven.

33 For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34 They said therefore unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 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.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life." (John 6:35.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 63:1-8.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

January 25.	M	The Five Thousand Fed (John 6:8-14)
January 26.	T	Jesus the Bread of Life (John 6:30-35)
January 27.	W	Life from the Living Bread (John 6:41-51)
January 28.	T	Manna in the Wilderness (Ex. 16:4, 5, 13-15)
January 29.	F	Murmuring at the Manna (Num. 11:4-10)
January 30.	S	"Come Ye, Buy, and Eat" (Isa. 55:1-3)
January 31.	S	"He Satisfieth the Longing Soul" (Psalm 107:1-9)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 30. If it was the Feast of the Passover, as seems most likely, that Jesus was attending when he healed the man at the pool of Bethesda, then the time of the incidents of this lesson was A.D. 30, for another Passover was at hand. John mentions few of the things that occurred during that year.

Place.—It must have been near the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee, near a village called Bethsaida. From Matt. 14:13 we learn that Jesus and his disciples went to this place in a boat, and that the "multitudes . . . followed him on foot."

Persons.—Jesus, the disciples, and a multitude.

Lesson Links.—The student should not fail to read the first seven verses of chapter six, and also the following parallel passages: Matt. 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17. From Matthew we learn that word had just reached Galilee that Herod had beheaded John the Baptist. From Mark and Luke we learn that the apostles had just returned from their first preaching tour. They made a report to Jesus concerning what they had done and what they had taught. "And he saith unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while." With our conception of a desert these days, it would not seem to be a suitable place to rest a while; but in New Testament usage a desert was not what we now call a desert, but merely an uninhabited place. It was not a dry, waterless region, destitute of vegetation. The student will notice that Jesus and his disciples went to this desert in a boat, and that there was much green grass in the place.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Preparing to Feed the Multitude (Verses 8-10)

"Now the passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand." Great crowds attended this feast. At least, the most of the people of upper Galilee would pass through or near Capernaum. We can see how the crowds would accumulate more and more people as they passed

through the towns and cities on their way to the feast. Those who passed through Capernaum, or near that city, having seen Jesus in some of his journeys, or having heard about his wonderful works, would want to see him. Jesus and his disciples went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee to have some rest from these crowds; "for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat." (Mark 6:31.) But they did not entirely escape from the pressure of the multitudes. These people wanted to see Jesus, and many wanted to be cured of their ailments. Hence, when they saw Jesus and his disciples going to the other side of the sea in a boat, they went around on foot; they did not mean to let him slip from them. That he and his disciples needed rest did not concern them. When Jesus saw them coming to him, he had compassion on them, and healed them that were sick, and preached to the multitude the kingdom of God. His miracles of healing would gain for him a favorable hearing. Churches and individual Christians may today gain a more favorable hearing by doing all they can to relieve human sufferings and needs. As the day drew toward the close, the disciples began to wonder how this vast multitude could be fed out in the open country. Jesus said to Philip, "Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat?" He was testing Philip, for he himself knew what he would do. Philip replied that two hundred shillings would not buy enough that each one might have a little. The disciples thought the multitude should be sent into the villages and country round about, so that they might buy food. It appears that practical Andrew had been investigating the food situation; he had this report to make: "There is a lad here, who hath five barley loaves, and two fishes: but what are these among so many?" This lad had an eye to business, for it is not likely that he brought five loaves for his own use. It might be interesting, if we could follow up the history of that youngster. Jesus commanded that the loaves be brought to him. It is not likely that any had the least idea as to what Jesus had in mind when he commanded the disciples to arrange the people in companies with about fifty in each company. This orderly arrangement prevented confusion, and made it possible for the disciples to make a proper distribution of food. It seems to have been a quiet and orderly multitude, for they readily arranged themselves as requested, though the multitude numbered about five thousand men, besides the women and children. Perhaps word had gone out that they were being so arranged that they might be fed.

The Multitude Fed—the Fragments Saved (Verses 11-13)

Five loaves and two fishes with which to feed five thousand men, besides the women and children—the multitude must have thought there was slim chance for a satisfying meal. Jesus knew what he was about to do. "Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down; likewise also of the fishes as much as they would." From the other writers we learn that Jesus distributed the food through the agency of the disciples. Before doing so, he gave thanks; Mark says he blessed. In Bible usage to bless and to give thanks are one and the same thing. In giving thanks for the food before eating it, Jesus set us an example, an example which all Christians should follow.

Once Jesus refused to make bread to satisfy his own hunger. At that time either one or all of the following reasons may have caused his refusal to make bread: (1) The devil had suggested that he make bread, and he was not minded to follow the devil's suggestion in anything; (2) he would not use his miraculous powers to satisfy his own hunger; (3) he was not seeking to convince the devil that he was the Son of God, and there was no one else present to be convinced. But the circumstances were entirely different on this occasion. Here there was a multitude of hungry people present, and they had come because of him. They were really his guests, though uninvited. He was responsible in a measure for their being there. Here was also a great opportunity to show his power to people whom he wished to influence, and by that miracle to make these people his friends—make them know that he was what he claimed to be. It seems that the bread and the fishes increased in amount as they were broken into pieces. Both increased in amount till all had food in plenty, and there were fragments of bread and fish left after all had eaten to the full. Jesus was not willing to throw away good food, so he said to his disciples, "Gather up the broken pieces which remain over, that nothing be lost." This is a fine lesson against wastefulness. To save is not stinginess, but wastefulness is a sin. People are sometimes wasteful because they are too careless or too lazy to be otherwise, or else they do not realize that wastefulness is a great drain on their resources. But some may ask, "If Jesus did not want anything to be wasted, why did he make more than was needed?" He wanted it to stand out plainly that a great miracle had been wrought. Had every one eaten enough with nothing left over, most likely the people would have thought it strange that all had enough when the supply was so meager, and thought no more about it might not have thought that a miracle had been wrought; but when much more was taken up than the original supply amounted to, everyone could see clearly that a great miracle had been wrought. They knew that the one who could work such a miracle was sent of God.

The Effect on the Multitude (Verse 14)

The full effect of this miracle will not be seen unless we also read the fifteenth verse: "Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force, to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain himself alone." This miracle stirred the people as no other miracle had. They decided that Jesus was the prophet foretold by Moses, the Messiah of the prophets. The Roman yoke was galling to them; besides, they had recently heard that John the Baptist had been beheaded by Herod. This had stirred them to anger. They were ready for revolt, and Jesus seemed to be the long-looked-for deliverer. And the miracle just witnessed seemed to make him the ideal leader, for he could feed an army anywhere. The problem of feeding an army is always great, and now the food problem was settled to begin with; they therefore were ready to make him king by force of arms. Had Jesus been of a mind to do so, he could have called for some rallying speeches, made one himself, and at once started out with an army of five thousand men, which would have soon been swelled to much larger proportions. But that sort of war, and that sort of crown and kingdom, had no place in his plans. To allow this excitement to subside, he "withdrew again into the mountain himself alone."

The People Ask for a Sign (Verses 30, 31)

During the height of excitement after the five thousand were fed, Jesus and his disciples went back across the sea to Capernaum. On the morrow the multitude also crossed over to Capernaum, "seeking Jesus." To them Jesus said, "Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves, and were filled." He exhorted them to labor "for the food which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him the Father, even God, hath sealed. They said therefore unto him, What must we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus said unto them, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." If those who asked for a sign were of the five thousand whom he had fed the day before, it seems strange that they should now be asking for a sign; or perhaps they were asking for some great demonstration like that which accompanied the giving of the law from Sinai, or like the giving of the manna; "as it is written, He gave them bread out of heaven." They evidently thought that was a greater miracle than Jesus performed the day before.

Jesus the Bread of Life (Verses 32-35)

It was not Moses that caused the manna to be formed about the camps, but the Father; and he does more—he gives the true bread out of heaven. The manna fed the body, and perished with the using. "For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world." The true bread is that which gives and maintains spiritual life; nothing else can take its place. All nostrums invented by men and offered by them as substitutes utterly fail to give and to maintain life. Only from heaven comes the life-giving bread. Sometimes people ask/or things they know not. That was true of these Jews when they said, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." They must have had in mind material bread. Or if they had in mind bread to give spiritual life, they would have been glad to have that, if they could get it on their own terms, and in the way they wanted it. People are like that, even today. Many would like to be saved, if the Lord would save them on their own terms. Only the few are willing to give themselves wholly to the Lord, and accept life on his terms. "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." This does not mean that merely coming to Christ satisfies all spiritual desires. There must still continue the hungering and thirsting for righteousness. But it does mean that the person who sincerely comes to the Lord will find in him full satisfaction for all the desires of his soul. He will seek spiritual food and drink nowhere else. We will never feed so much on this bread of life that we will want no more. Again Jesus says, verses 48-50, "I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which cometh down out of heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die." The fathers ate physical bread, and died physically; if a man eat this spiritual bread, he will live.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Man has a spirit, as well as a body; both need food—must have food, if they live. Too many people live a mere animal life. They

seek food and body comforts, and indulge their appetites and passions, with no thought of the needs of their spirit. The only thing about them that will endure forever, they neglect entirely. They will never know their folly till it is too late.

Jesus is not literal bread—he is a person. We feed upon him by feeding upon his word. Said he, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4.) We will delight in feeding on the word, if we can say with David, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Therefore I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold."

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The sin of wastefulness.
The needs of the body and the spirit.
The importance of Bible study.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give the time, place, and persons.
What news had stirred the people to anger?
In New Testament usage, what is a desert?

Verses 8-10

Why were such crowds "coming and going" at Capernaum at this time?
Why did Jesus and the disciples cross to the other side of the sea?
How did the multitudes follow?
What problem presented itself?
How were the people arranged?

Verses 11-13

What food supply was present?
What about the fragments?
Why did Jesus make so much food?

Verse 14

Discuss the effect on the multitude.

Verses 30, 31

Discuss the intervening verses.
Discuss verses 30, 31.

Verses 32-35

Discuss the talk about the manna.
Discuss what Jesus said about the true bread.
How do we feed on this bread of life?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VI—February 7, 1943

JESUS AFFIRMS HIS DEITY

John 8:12, 25-36, 56-59

12 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.

25 They said therefore unto him, Who art thou? Jesus said unto them, Even that which I have also spoken unto you from the beginning.

26 I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you: howbeit he that sent me is true; and the things which I heard from him, these speak I unto the world.

27 They perceived not that he spake to them of the Father.

28 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.

29 And he that sent me is with me; he hath not left me alone; for I do always the things that are pleasing to him.

30 As he spake these things, many believed on him.

31 Jesus therefore said to those Jews that had believed him, If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples;

32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

33 They answered unto him, We are Abraham's seed, and have never yet been in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin.

35 And the bondservant abideth not in the house for ever: the son abideth for ever.

36 If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.

57 The Jews therefore said unto him. Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily. I say unto you, Before Abraham was born, I am.

59 They took up stones therefore to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple.

GOLDEN TEXT—"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." (John 14:9.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Phil. 2:1-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

February 1.	M	The Light Of the World (John 8:12-20)
February 2.	T	The Liberator from Sin (John 8:25-36)
February 3.	W	The Lord Without Beginning (John 8:56-59)
February 4.	T	The Lord Alive Forevermore (Rev. 1:8, 17, 18)
February 5.	F	Deity Affirmed in Prayer (John 17:1-8)
February 6.	S	Deity Affirmed Under Oath (Matt. 26:59-68)
February 7.	S	"Equality with God" (Phil. 2:5-11)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 30.

Place.—Jerusalem.

Persons.—Jesus and the Jews.

Lesson Links.—In the text of lesson five Jesus affirmed that he was the bread that came down from heaven. Also in verse 38 he said, "For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." His repeated assertion that he came down from heaven was very puzzling to the Jews. "And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how doth he now say, I am come down out of heaven?" To this Jesus replied, "Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me." People are drawn to Christ, and yet they do the coming. The Father draws them through the power of teaching. Between the incidents of the last lesson and this, two things occurred that to us would be discouraging. Because some of the disciples did not like some things Jesus said, they went back, and walked no more with him. Then his brethren showed their disbelief in him, and scoffed at his claims. "Now the feast of the Jews, the feast of tabernacles, was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may behold thy works which thou doest. For no man doeth anything in secret, and himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou doest these things, manifest thyself to the world. For even his brethren did not believe on him." For his own brethren thus to scoff at his claims would seem to be discouraging. He said to them, "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it,

that its works are evil." After his brethren had gone to the feast, Jesus himself went up, "not publicly, but as it were in secret." "But when it was now the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught."

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Jesus the Light of the World (Verse 12)

Jesus is the source of all spiritual light, as he is of all life. He came to give light and life to all who would accept him. To follow him is to walk in the light, and we follow him by following his teaching, we can follow him in no other way. His light shines out through his gospel; it is the only way we have of receiving light from him. Christians are the light of the world, because the light of Jesus shines out through them. A Christian may carry the light of Jesus to others by teaching the gospel of Christ. And while he is teaching the pure gospel to others, his life should not belie his teaching. Christians should hold forth the word of life, and by so doing shine as lights in the world. (Phil. 2:15, 16.) "Ye are the light of the world ... Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 5:14-16.)

Jesus Spoke the Words of His Father (Verses 25-27)

The student should not fail to read verses 13-24. In these verses the controversy with the Jews continued. In them Jesus continued to assert his deity. "I am he that beareth witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. They said therefore unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye know neither me, nor my Father: if ye knew me, ye would know my Father also." "And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. 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." Again and again Jesus asserts that God sent him; he did not come of himself. They had asked him, "Where is thy Father?" Now they ask him, "Who art thou?" They had not believed what he had said about himself; there was nothing to be gained by telling them again; so he said to them, "Even that which I have also spoken unto you from the beginning." These men were not asking for information to be used for any good purpose. To give such men information is like casting pearls before swine. But there was no weakness in the manner in which Jesus spoke; he spoke with authority, and offered no apologies for what he said. "I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you: howbeit he that sent me is true; and the things which I heard from him, these speak I unto the world." He assured them that all the things he said unto them were true, for he spoke to them only the things he had heard from the Father. "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.) In this assertion of his Sonship, Jesus lays down a principle that should be adopted by everyone who claims to be his follower—speak only the things that come from above.

"He That Sent Me Is with Me" (Verses 28-30)

"When ye have lifted up the Son of man," that is, when you have lifted up the Son of man on the cross. John 3:14 also refers to the crucifixion: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." Again: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." We know that this refers to his crucifixion, for John immediately adds, "But this he said, signifying by what manner of death he should die." The multitude also understood him to refer to his coming crucifixion, for they said, "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?" It is sad that, even now, in sermon and song, people are exhorted to lift up Christ! Plenty of people crucify the Son of God afresh without being exhorted to do so! When they had crucified him, some of them would accept him as the Messiah; this they did from Pentecost onward. Jesus did nothing of himself; he did the Father's will, not his own. "For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (John 6:38.) "As the Father taught me, I speak these things." Hence in both word and deed Jesus did his Father's will. And herein he set every Christian an example, but how few professed Christians care enough about the example he set to even try to imitate him! Because the Father had sent him, and because he always did the things that were pleasing to the Father, Jesus had the assurance that the Father was with him. The boldness and assurance with which he spoke caused many to believe on him.

The Truth Makes Free (Verses 31, 32)

These men who believed on Jesus did not know much about his teaching; they were not yet his disciples in reality. A disciple is a learner, a disciple of Jesus is one who in reality takes Jesus as his teacher. To claim to be his disciple, and yet not learn what he teaches, is an empty profession. One must know the truth for the truth to make him free; a mere claim of accepting the truth avails nothing. To know the truth makes one free from ignorance; to live as the truth directs makes one free from sinful deeds. A person who is ignorant of the word of Christ does not—cannot—abide in it. A man who has the opportunity to know the word, and yet does not know it, and does not try to know it, comes dangerously near to being willfully ignorant.

The Son Frees from Bondage (Verses 33-36)

The Jews depended on their fleshly descent from Abraham. "We are Abraham's seed," said they; and with them that settled their standing with God. They counted too much on this relationship. Besides, they did not know, and would not know, that a new order was about to begin, in which descent from Abraham would count for nothing. John the Baptist had intimated this when he said, "Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance: and think 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." (Matt. 3:8, 9.) In view of the past history of the Jews, and their condition at the time of our lesson, it is had to see

just what they meant when they said they had never been in bondage to any man. It is true that that generation were not slaves, though they were under a sort of bondage to Rome. But Jesus implied that they were then in bondage; this they resented. "How sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" But they had in mind slavery to a human master. Jesus was referring to an entirely different kind of slavery, a slavery that ruins and damns men. "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin." And this bondage to sin leads to death; hence it is also bondage unto death. "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.) In giving his blood as the ransom price for our redemption from sin, Jesus made it possible for us to free ourselves from the reign of sin, the bondage of sin. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof." (Rom. 6:12.) This shows that in Christ a man can gain the mastery over sin. Every man is responsible for his own sins. A bond servant has no standing in the home he serves, but a child born in the home is an heir. A child of God is an heir of God, a joint heir with Christ. But Jesus can make the bond servant of sin free—free from the bondage to sin; such a one is then free indeed.

"Before Abraham Was Born, I Am" (Verses 56-59)

In the intervening verses the controversy with the Jews continued, and it grew rather warm and personal. In verses 37-39 Jesus makes a distinction between their being the seed of Abraham and their being the children of Abraham. "I know that ye are Abraham's seed . . . If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works Of Abraham." These Jews were Abraham's seed after the flesh, but in a higher sense they were not the children of Abraham. They were not at all like Abraham in character they did not do the works of Abraham. Neither were they the children of God, though they said God was their Father. Jesus said to them, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do." Jesus did not hesitate to attack the character of his opponents when the occasion demanded it. They claimed God as their Father; Jesus said they had not known him. "But I know him; and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be like unto you, a liar." That is plain language. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." "My day" evidently refers to the time of Christ, including the gospel age. Here some of the commentators seem to stumble. If, as they say, Abraham saw Christ appearing to him as an angel, that does not explain how Abraham saw "my day." Either of two simpler explanations are possible. Based on the promises made to Abraham, he saw Christ's day by the eye of faith; or, he saw it in a vision. But the Jews understood Jesus literally—that he was claiming to have been alive as a man during the life of Abraham. So they said, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" This gives us no idea as to how old Christ was; the Jews did not know his age, and granted him all the years that he as a man could possibly claim. They were merely saying that he was not old enough to have seen Abraham. He replied, "Before Abraham was born, I am." He was here affirming his deity, and

that all time was present to him. With deity all time is an eternal now. The Jews understood him to be affirming his deity. To them this was blasphemy, for they regarded him as only a man. They therefore prepared to stone him, but Jesus slipped away from them.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Jesus spoke boldly; there was no tinge of doubt in anything he said, nor any indication to compromise. The assurance and boldness with which he spoke carried conviction to many hearts. Too many preach the truth as if they are not sure that it is true.

Truth makes free. Truth on any subject, if understood and practiced, makes one free from error. But in a broad sense, when is a thing or a person free? A fish is free when it moves unhindered in water, its natural element. It is not free on dry land. God made man in a state of righteousness; that is therefore his natural element, and in it alone is he free. Sin is not his natural element; in it therefore he is not free, but is in bondage.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The boldness with which Jesus taught.
His method in controversy with his enemies,
The deity of Jesus.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

with him?
In what way is Jesus an example to us in teaching?

Lesson Settings

Give the time, place, and persons.
Give some points of interest between last lesson and this one.

Verses 31, 32
What is a real disciple of Christ?
Who is able to abide in the word of Christ?

Verse 12

Repeat and discuss verse 12.

Verses 33-36
On what did the Jews rely?
What did John the Baptist say about such reliance?
Who are bond servants of sin?
Discuss this bondage to sin, and how we are made free from it.

Verses 25-27

Give a summary of verses 13-24.
Read and discuss verses 25-27.

Verses 28-30

"When ye have lifted up the Son of man," what does this mean?
Give other references on this point.
Should we now exhort in sermon and song people to lift up Christ?
Discuss the evils of so perverting the scriptures.
On what grounds did Jesus say the Father was

Verses 56-59
Discuss some of the things said in the intervening verses.
Discuss verse 56.
In what way did Jesus affirm his deity?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VII—February 14, 1943

JESUS HEALS A MAN BORN BLIND

John 9:13-38

18 The Jews therefore did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and had received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight,

19 And asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?

20 His parents answered and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind:

21 But how he now seeth, we know not; or who opened his eyes, we know not: ask him; he is of age; he shall speak for himself.

22 These things said his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man should confess him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

23 Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.

24 So they called a second time the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give glory to God: we know that this man is a sinner.

25 He therefore answered, Whether he is a sinner, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

26 They said therefore unto him, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?

27 He answered them, I told you even now, and ye did not hear; wherefore would ye hear it again? would ye also become his disciples?

28 And they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are disciples of Moses.

29 We know that God hath spoken unto Moses: but as for this man, we know not whence he is.

30 The man answered and said unto them, Why, herein is the marvel, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he opened mine eyes.

31 We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he heareth.

32 Since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind.

33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.

34 They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and finding him, he said, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

36 He answered and said, And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?

37 Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with thee.

38 And he said, Lord. I believe. And he worshipped him.

GOLDEN TEXT—"One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." (John 9:25.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 27:1-6.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

February 8.	M	Sight for Blind Eyes (John 9:1-11)
February 9.	T	The Questioning Critic (John 9:18-23)
February 10.	W	Witness for the Wonder-Worker (John 9:24-34)
February 11.	T	Sight and Salvation (John 9:35-41)
February 12.	F	Believing and Seeing (Matt. 9:27-31)
February 13.	S	Seeing and Following (Matt. 20:29-34)
February 14.	S	"My Light and My Salvation" (Psalm 27:1-6)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 30.

Place.—Jerusalem.

Persons.—Jesus, the man born blind, his parents, and the Pharisees.

Lesson Links.—Concerning the man born blind, the disciples asked Jesus a peculiar question. "Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?" It is easy to see how they might think the sin of the parents caused their son to be born blind; but how could they think that the man himself sinned before he was born, so as to cause himself to be born blind. That seems to have been one of those thoughtless questions that people so often ask. But Jesus answered them according to their question. Neither he nor his parents had caused him to be born blind, but his blindness furnished an opportunity for the works of God to be made

manifest. To the blind man day was as night. Jesus was the light of the world; hence he would give this man light, and in so doing show that he could also. give spiritual light. His procedure was evidently meant to attract attention to what he was about to do. He spit on the ground and made clay, and put it on the man's eyes. He then said to the man, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." So far as the record shows, Jesus made no promise as to results. The blind man did not say, "It is difficult for me to go anywhere; why ask me to do such a useless thing?" No; he was obedient. "He went away therefore, and washed, and came seeing." In doing the thing commanded the blind man was not in the least degree paying for his cure—it was a free gift. His neighbors were astonished at the cure, and said, "Is not this he that sat and begged?" Some said, "It is he: others said, No, but he is like him." The man himself settled the dispute, "I am he." Some who thought the Pharisees should pass on everything took him to the Pharisees, the men in authority. In answer to their questioning the man told them what had been done. "Some therefore of the Pharisees said, This man is not from God, because he keepeth not the sabbath. But others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such signs? And there was a division among them. They say therefore unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, in that he opened thine eyes? And he said, He is a prophet."

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Pharisees Question the Man's Parents (Verses 18-23)

The Pharisees here mentioned were those in authority in Jerusalem. Here was something occurring outside of their knowledge, and therefore without their authority; they therefore felt that they must thoroughly investigate the matter. They could get nothing satisfactory out of the man whose eyes had been opened, for he knew not where his benefactor was. He had said, "He is a prophet." But these authorities did not believe what the man had told them. They therefore called his parents before their court of inquiry, to see what they could learn from them. "Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind." They were not as candid witnesses as they should have been, for they were afraid that full testimony would jeopardize their standing. "But how he now seeth, we know not; or who opened his eyes, we know not." They would put the entire burden of testifying on their son: "Ask him; he is of age; he shall speak for himself." They knew that the Jews had agreed to put out of the synagogue any who confessed that Jesus was the Christ. The word synagogue originally applied to a group of Jews who had banded themselves together for study and mutual edification; later it came to be applied also to the house in which the group met. In this place the synagogue was the congregation of worshipers. Any man therefore that confessed Jesus to be the Christ would be excommunicated. These parents did not want this to happen to them; "therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him." To be turned out of the synagogue was to be classed as a sinner. These parents were determined to save themselves from such humiliation, even if such did happen to their son.

The Man Born Blind Questioned Again (Verses 24-27)

Having failed to obtain satisfactory answers from the parents, the authorities again called the man before them for further questioning. And this was not to their credit, for they had no good purpose in so doing. They did not want anything to be done, not even the giving of sight to a man who had been born blind, without their authority. Besides, their tradition about the Sabbath had been violated. They were prosecutors, instead of being an impartial court of inquiry. Before any other questioning they pronounced judgment. "Give glory to God: we know that this man is a sinner." In his answer the man seems to have answered from their standpoint, rather than expressing any doubt as to whether or not the man who healed him was a sinner. He had already pronounced him a prophet, and continued to defend him against the charge that he was a sinner. One thing he knew; he had been born blind, but could now see. Had the authorities not been blinded by their own conceits, they would have known that a sinner could not have worked such a miracle of mercy. After pronouncing Jesus a sinner, they again inquired what his benefactor had done to him, and how he had opened his eyes. The reply showed that the man had become somewhat exasperated at their not believing what he had already said. He knew, too, that they had no good purpose in questioning him. "I told you even now, and ye did not hear," that is, they did not believe what he had said. Why would they believe, should he tell them again. Then he put a little irony into a question he asked them, "Would ye also become his disciples"? Are you really seeking to find out the truth, so that you may become his disciples? Of course he knew that they had no such purpose.

"They Reviled Him" (Verses 28-30)

And here is another strange thing. A court of inquiry reviled a man whom they had called before them as a witness. His question, "Would ye also become his disciples?" had stirred them to anger; they resented both his attitude and his question. Sneeringly they said to their witness, "Thou art his disciple." They did not know how greatly they were cheating themselves, nor how much they were exalting their witness above themselves. "Thou art his disciple"—what greater position could he have occupied? They professed to be the disciples of Moses, but were they? They did not give heed to all that Moses said. On another occasion Jesus said to these Jews, "Think not that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, on whom ye have set your hope. For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5:45-47.) Moses had said, "Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; according to all that thou desiredst of Jehovah thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of Jehovah my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And Jehovah said unto me, They have well said that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever

will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." (Deut. 18:15-19.) When Jehovah raised up this prophet, the Jews did not believe him. They said, "As for this man, we know not whence he is." They could have known whence he was, had they given honest consideration to the works he was doing. "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.) Nicodemus, one of the members of the Sanhedrin, had the right idea. He said to Jesus, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." (John 3:1, 2.) The man before the court had a clearer idea as to what constituted real evidence than did his judges. "The man answered and said unto them, Why, herein is the marvel, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he opened mine eyes." These men were determined to reject all evidence that Jesus was the Christ. Later, when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, "the chief priests therefore and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many signs So from that day forth they took counsel that they might put him to death." They also took counsel to put Lazarus to death, "because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus."

"God Heareth Not Sinners" (Verses 31-34)

The man made a statement of an accepted doctrine among the Jews; but his statement had no reference to what is now usually referred to as an alien sinner. He knew that the man who opened his eyes was a Jew, and so did the court. A sinner among the Jews was a religious outcast, and therefore a social outcast. It should be known also that the man born blind was not an inspired man, any more than was the court when they said, "We know that this man is a sinner." But it is an injustice to the man's language to make it apply to an alien sinner. It is true, that, if a servant of God turns away his ear from hearing the Lord, he need not pray while disobedience is in his heart. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination." (Prov. 28:9.) But if an alien earnestly seeks to know and to do the will of God, God is pleased with his prayers, as in the case of Cornelius. Even so, he must obey the gospel in order to be saved. "But if any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he heareth." It seems that the witness had turned to be judge. Since the world began no one had ever opened the eyes of one born blind., It is strange that this fact had no weight with these blind persecutors, but there is no way to make a man believe when he is determined not to believe. These Jews should have known that no man by his own powers could do such mighty works as Jesus had been doing; and they should also have known that no man by the power of the devil would perform such miracles of mercy and benevolence as those Jesus had performed. But their own stubbornness and self-importance would not allow them to believe anything that did not fit into their own ideas of things. It is pitiful, and also disgusting, to see a man such a slave to his own feeling of importance. But these judges knew they could not meet the arguments of their witness; and so they did as evil men always do—they resorted to abuse and persecution. They wanted to say something ugly to him, though they likely did not

know the exact meaning of their statement when they said, "Thou wast altogether born in sins." They did not propose to be taught by such as he, so far above him did they consider themselves. "And they cast him out." This likely means that they ousted him from synagogue membership. (See verse 22.)

"Lord, I Believe" (Verses 35-38)

The man whose eyes had been opened did not yet know who had done him such a favor. After the Jews had cast him out, Jesus found him and said, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" But he did not know who it was, that he might believe on him. Jesus identified himself to the man as the Son of God. "And he said, Lord, I believe." Though he saw the Lord, he did not know who he was till the Lord told him; and so his faith came by hearing. Faith comes in no other way; it can come in no other way. "How shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."

SOME REFLECTIONS

There were thousands of blind people in the world when Jesus gave sight to the blind man of our lesson. Why single him out, and leave the others blind? Because his miracles were wrought in such connections as to prove his claims.

There was a lot of snobbery about these Jewish leaders. The blind man did not belong to their class, but to a lower stratum of the people; they therefore did not propose to have any teaching from him. That same pride still makes a lot of fools out of otherwise sensible people.

Where did people get the idea that faith is lost in sight? Jesus said to Thomas; "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed." And consider also the man of our lesson. Accept no proverb, or saying, because it is time-honored. Many of them are false.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The folly and evils of snobbery.

How religious customs influence people.

How prejudice and selfishness blind people.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give the time, place, and persons.

What is peculiar about the question the disciples asked Jesus?

Tell what was done in giving sight to the blind man.

Why take him to the Pharisees?

What judgments did they render?

Verses 18-23

What had the blind man said about the man who opened his eyes?

Why did the Pharisees call the man's parents? Give their answer, and why they were evasive. Give the meaning, or use, of the word synagogue.

Verses 24-27

What had Jesus violated concerning the Sabbath?

What answer did the man give his questioners? Discuss the points in verses 24-27.

Verses 28-30

Discuss verse 28.

Show that these Jews did not really believe
Moses.
What had Moses said as to a prophet?
Why did they not know whence Jesus was?
Why did the blind man know whence he was?

Verses 31-34

Discuss verse 31.
Whom will not God hear?

Discuss the man's speech.
What did the Jews say and do to him?

Verses 35-38

How did the man find out who his benefactor
was?
How did his faith come?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VIII—February 21, 1943

JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

John 10:1-5, 11-16, 27-30

1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

4 When he hath put forth all his own, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep.

12 He that is a hireling, and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf snatcheth them, and scattereth them:

13 He fleeth because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me

15 Even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd.

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.

29 My Father, who hath given them unto me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

30 I and the Father are one.

GOLDEN TEXT—"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep." (John 10:11.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 23.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

February 15. M

February 16. T

February 17. W

February 18. T

February 19. F

February 20. S

February 21. S

The Good Shepherd Leads (John 10:1-5)

The Good Shepherd Saves (John 10:11-16)

The Good Shepherd Keeps (John 10:27-30)

The Good Shepherd Searches (Ezek. 34:11-16)

The Good Shepherd Restores (Luke 15:1-7)

The Shepherd of Our Souls (1 Pet. 2:21-25)

"Jehovah Is My Shepherd" (Psalm 23:1-6)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 30.

Place.—Jerusalem.

Persons.—Jesus and the Jews, as is shown by what is said in verses 19-21. By the term Jews, John usually refers to the official class in Jerusalem. Again there was a division among them. It was most likely that Joseph and Nicodemus were the ones who defended Jesus.

Lesson Links.—Jesus taught much by parables, though he did not always speak in parables. The following quotation from the Bible Encyclopedia and Scriptural Dictionary may prove to be both interesting and helpful:

"The parables uttered by our Savior claim pre-eminence over all others on account of their number, variety, appositeness, and beauty. Indeed it is impossible to conceive of a mode of instruction better fitted to engage the attention, interest the feelings, and impress the conscience, than that which our Lord adopted. Among its advantages may be mentioned the following:

"(1). Secure Attention. It secured the attention of multitudes who would not have listened to truth conveyed in the form of abstract propositions.

"(2). Familiar Method. This mode of teaching was one with which the Jews were familiar, and for which they entertained a preference.

"(3). Tactful Some truths which, if openly stated, would have been opposed by a barrier of prejudice, were in this way insinuated, as it were, into men's minds, and secured their assent unawares.

"(4). Hidden Truth. The parabolic style was well adapted to conceal Christ's meaning from those who, through obstinacy and perverseness, were indisposed to receive it. This is the meaning of Isaiah in the passage quoted in Matt. 13:13. Not that the truth was ever hidden from those who sincerely sought to know it; but it was wrapped in just enough obscurity to veil it from those who 'had pleasure in unrighteousness,' and who would 'not come to the light lest their deeds should be reprov'd.' In accordance with strict justice, such were 'given up to strong delusions, that they might believe a lie.' 'With the upright man thou wilt show thyself upright; with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward.'"

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Thieves and Robbers (Verse 1)

In studying a parable there is danger that we try to make it mean more than Jesus intended it to mean. Any figure of speech can be pressed too far. A parable is a comparison, an illustration, and no comparison or illustration can be made to fit in every detail. We should seek to see what lesson Jesus was intending to teach, and not try to go beyond that. In Palestine many sheep were grazed in the open country or the fields. For protection at night against animals, thieves, and robbers they were kept in a sheepfold, an uncovered enclosure in the open country, large enough to accommodate all the sheep near enough to it to be led into it as night approached. At the gate an armed porter stood guard to keep out all animals and all persons who had no business inside. His responsibility was great; a coward would have been worthless. He had to remain wide-awake and alert, lest robbers pounce upon him unawares, or sneak thieves or animals succeed in getting over the walls. Thieves had no credentials to prove they had a right to any sheep

inside the fold, and therefore they could not enter by the door. If they got any sheep, they had to climb up some other way. These thieves and robbers do not represent those who through false pretense gain fellowship in churches. Such people come in apparently in the regular way, under pretense of being followers of Christ. Thieves and robbers did not come claiming to be sheep, but to take the sheep from their owners. The Pharisees were thieves and robbers, for they had just tried to take from Jesus the man whose eyes he had opened. They would have gladly taken all his followers from him, if they could have done so. There are such characters today. Any man who seeks to gain followers for his own selfish ends and purposes is a thief and a robber, for he steals men's souls, and robs them of salvation here and hereafter, by stealing them away from following the Lord.

The Shepherd of the Sheep (Verses 2-5)

The shepherd entered by the door, for it was the porter's duty to open to him. The sheep knew the voice of their own shepherd, and readily answered his call, and would answer the call of no one else. Every other person was a stranger to the sheep. The shepherd had names for all his sheep, and called them by name. In that country the shepherd led his sheep. In this country sheep are generally driven before the shepherd. Then the sheep knew the voice of their shepherd; they would not follow a stranger, even when he put on the clothing of their shepherd.- They went by voice, and not by appearance. The sheepfold suggests protection and security. To try to make the sheepfold represent the church involves one in a lot of difficulties. For one thing, the sheepfold generally had within it several different flocks of sheep, and each flock had its own shepherd. And it cannot be, as some think, that John the Baptist was the porter. It is certain that John the Baptist does not stand guard at the door of the church. It is more likely that the sheepfold and the porter were mentioned to complete the picture, for it is plain that the point of emphasis is the relation of the shepherd and his sheep; the predominant idea is the shepherd's care for his sheep. We shall be led into various errors if we expect each point in a parable, or in any other figure, to have some exact counterpart in the church, or in any phase of Christianity. In this parable the followers of Christ are spoken of as sheep; but certainly the followers of Christ are not like sheep in all particulars! Jesus is our shepherd; but he does not resort to the same methods shepherds then employed. It is interesting to note how carefully the shepherds of that time looked after their sheep, and also how obediently and trustfully the sheep followed their shepherd. It illustrates the close relationship that exists between Jesus and his true followers. He is the true shepherd; he knows his own, and they follow his guidance. Our shepherd does not drive his sheep; he leads them; they hear his voice, and follow him. Any real disciple of Christ knows better than to try to go his own way; he knows that it is not in man to direct his steps. Neither will he follow the voice of the stranger; to the sheep anyone but the shepherd is a stranger. If Jesus is really your shepherd, if you really belong to him, then any other leader is to you a stranger, and you will not follow him. But this requires that we acquaint ourselves with Jesus and his teaching, so much so that when we hear any false teaching we will know that it is not true, even though we have in

mind no certain passage of scripture. It is too often true that some church members are ready to accept wrong ideas from the preacher whom they greatly admire, but the true disciple follows no man. He knows whether the voice he hears is the voice of a stranger or the voice of his shepherd. But too many members are not sufficiently acquainted with the Lord to know whether they are hearing his voice or the voice of a stranger. In Palestine a man put on the shepherd's clothing to see if he could fool the sheep; but the familiar voice was lacking, and they would not follow him. Appearance did not deceive them; it is a pity that some church members are not as wise as the simple sheep, but allow appearance to deceive them. The Christian walks by faith, and not by appearance; he recognizes no leader, save the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Shepherd in Contrast with Thieves and Robbers (Verses 11-15)

The student should study verses 6-10, for they are really a part of our lesson. In verse 7 Jesus said, "I am the door of the sheep." This is really a different parable from that in verses 1-5. There he was the shepherd; here he is the door. This should not be thought a strange thing, for his relations to us are as many-sided as our needs. Through him, and him alone, may we enter into God's favor and protection, and thus into salvation from sin. To these same persecuting Jews Peter later said, "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." (Acts 4:12.) Jesus came that people might have life—might have life abundantly.

The thief seeks to appropriate the property of others to his own use. He seeks to steal and to destroy, even if he must kill to do so. But Jesus had reference to religious thieves. They seek to steal followers for their own uses. Such thieves, to deceive people into following them, must pretend to be greatly interested in the people and their welfare. The more completely such a thief gains the confidence and good will of the people, the more completely he can rob them of their cash for himself and their souls for his master, the devil. Jesus the good shepherd came to give his own life that he might give life to others. All Christians should imitate him in unselfish devotion to the good of others. Any man who assumes to be a leader of the people, and yet uses them for his own gain, instead of using himself to promote their good, is the lowest sort of a thief. In verses 2-5 Jesus gives us the characteristics of a good shepherd; now he tells us who the good shepherd is. "I am the good shepherd." He is the door into God's favor and blessings, and the shepherd over God's people. The thief takes the life of the sheep; the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. The good shepherd would defend the sheep even unto death. The hireling is not much better than the thief; for, though he would not steal and kill the sheep, being a coward and interested only in his wages, he would leave the sheep to wolves, rather than to endanger his own life. But if a man were paid wages to care for the flock, he would not be considered a mere hireling so long as he recognized his responsibility, and did what he could for the welfare and protection of the flock; such a man would be a shepherd. But the hireling careth not for the sheep. The good shepherd knows his sheep, and they know him—know his

voice. Jesus our shepherd speaks to us through his revealed will, as recorded in the New Testament. In it his voice is heard and in nothing else. The true disciple knows his teaching, and recognizes his authority, and therefore will not follow a stranger. But ignorance on the part of the people is the greatest asset the false teacher has; it is his capital and the source of his profit. Thus the people perish for lack of knowledge.

One Flock—One Shepherd (Verse 16)

The other sheep were those who among the Gentiles would become his followers under the preaching of the gospel. God sometimes speaks of things that are not as though they were. (Rom. 4:17.) He so speaks because of the future certainty of the things spoken of. The honest-hearted Gentiles were his in prospect; they would become his in reality when the gospel call should be extended to them. In a similar way God spoke of people in Corinth. He encouraged Paul to speak and to hold not his peace; "for," said he, "I have much people in this city." (Acts 18:9, 10.)

The Believer's Assurance (Verses 27-30)

Read verses 17-26. Jesus would voluntarily lay down his life for the salvation of man. There again arose a dispute among the authorities about Jesus. The Jews, who wanted desperately to have him say something that they could use against him, said to him, "How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believe not: the works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." In the sense of this parable of the shepherd and the sheep, a sheep is not necessarily the same as a child of God, or a Christian. A sheep, in the sense here used, is one who hears and recognizes the voice and authority of Jesus, even though he has not completed his obedience. "My sheep hear my voice, . . . and they follow me.' The weary and heavy laden must come to Jesus, and learn of him, in order to find rest from the burden of sin. He gives his sheep eternal life, but this does not mean that a child of God is here and now in actual possession of eternal life. A child of God is an heir of God—an heir of heaven and all it holds for him, but he does not actually have these things in full enjoyment so long as he lives here. Eternal life is the Christian's by inheritance; later he will come into full possession of that inheritance. No one can snatch a child of God away from him, but the child himself can go away. God is able to make your eternal salvation sure, but he does not force you to remain true to him. If you want to quit him, serve the devil, and be lost, you can do so.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Jesus is the chief shepherd. (1 Pet. 5:4.) Elders of churches are undershepherds. These elders, these undershepherds, are exhorted to feed the flock, to tend the flock. They therefore must be watchful. Too many elders shut their eyes to things they do not want to see, and thereby disqualify themselves.

Do not forget that a child of God can be led astray. We need not fear God's part. Many of the children of Israel, having been redeemed from bondage, fell in the wilderness. "Let us fear there-

fore, lest haply, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it."

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Lessons from the Palestine shepherd and his flock.
Elders as shepherds.
In the church who can now be called a hireling?

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give the time, place, and persons.
Discuss the meaning and use of parables.

Verse 1

Tell about the care and protection of sheep in Palestine.

What of thieves and robbers?

Verses 2-5

Discuss the relation of the shepherd and his sheep.

Show the danger of pressing a figure, or parable, too far.

Who was a stranger to the sheep?

What lesson is there in that for us?

What is the greatest aid to false teachers?

Verses 11-15

Discuss verses 6-10.

What sort of thieves did Jesus speak of?

Who are now religious thieves?

Discuss their methods.

Who now is a hireling?

Verse 16

Who were the other sheep?

Discuss the one fold.

Verses 27-30

Discuss verses 17-26.

In what sense do Christians now have eternal life?

Show that a child of God may go astray.

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IX—February 28, 1943

JESUS RESTORES LAZARUS TO LIFE

John 11:20-29, 32-35, 38-44

20 Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary still sat in the house.

21 Martha therefore said unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

22 And even now I know that, whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give thee.

23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live;

26 And whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die. Believest thou this?

27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, even he that cometh into the world.

28 And when she had said this, she went away, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Teacher is here, and calleth thee.

29 And she, when she heard it, arose quickly, and went unto him.

32 Mary therefore, when she came where Jesus was, and saw him, fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping who came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see.

35 Jesus wept.

38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

39 Jesus saith, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time the body decayeth; for he hath been dead four days.

40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou heartiest me.

42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the multitude that standeth around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me.

43 And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice. Lazarus. come forth.

44 He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

GOLDEN TEXT—"I am the resurrection, and the life." (John 11:25.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Pet. 1:3-12.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

February 22.	M	The Death of Lazarus (John 11:1-14)
February 23.	T	Martha Meets the Master (John 11:20-27)
February 24.	W	The Master Calls for Mary (John 11:28-37)
February 25.	T	Jesus Raises Lazarus (John 11:38-44)
February 26.	F	Jesus Raises the Widow's Son (Luke 7:11-16)
February 27.	S	Jesus Rises from the Dead (Mark 16:9-15)
February 28.	S	Our Hope of Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:42-49)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably the early part of A.D. 31. Our last lesson was a part of a speech delivered during the Feast of the Dedication, which came in our December.

Place.—Bethany. "Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off." It was a village located on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, near the road leading from Jerusalem to Jericho, and was the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, the devoted friends of Jesus; and in this home Jesus was often a guest during his visits to Jerusalem. It is now a village of about twenty poverty-stricken families.

Persons.—Jesus, his disciples, Martha, Mary, Lazarus, and some Jews who had come out from Jerusalem.

Lesson Links.—After the speech of our last lesson the Jews were so enraged at Jesus that "they sought again to take him." Jesus evaded them. Because of this growing hostility of the authorities, Jesus "went away again beyond the Jordan into the place where John was at the first baptizing; and there he abode." We are not told how long he remained at this place, but "many believed on him there." While there gloomy words came to him from his friends in Bethany. While Jesus was in this place beyond the Jordan, Martha and Mary sent a message to him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." Evidently these sisters thought this simple announcement would bring Jesus to their aid, but he had other plans; so "he abode at that time two days in the place where he was. Then after this he saith to the disciples, Let us go into Judaea again. The disciples say unto him, Rabbi, the Jews were but now seeking to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?" When the disciples saw that Jesus was determined to go to Bethany, Thomas, believing that Jesus would certainly be killed if he went to Bethany, said to the other apostles, "Let us also go, that we may

die with him." Thomas was so devoted to his Lord that he was willing to die also, if his Lord was killed; and he believed he would be killed on this trip. When Jesus reached Bethany, Lazarus had been in the tomb four days. It seems certain that Martha, Mary, and Lazarus were well-known and highly respected in Jerusalem, for many of the Jews, those in authority, had come out from Jerusalem to comfort and console Martha and Mary. When Jesus arrived, he tarried at the outskirts of the village.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Martha Goes Out to Meet Jesus (Verses 20-22)

It seems that Martha was older than Mary and Lazarus; at least, she took the lead in matters of which we have any record. When she heard that Jesus was coming, she went out of the village to meet him; "but Mary still sat in the house." Martha felt sure Jesus did not start on his journey to them so soon as he received their message, else he would have reached them earlier. There seems to be a tinge of chiding in what she said to Jesus: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." It had not occurred to her that he could have healed Lazarus without being present. She had faith in the power of Jesus, but not in as high a degree as did the centurion, who, when Jesus proposed to go to his home and heal his servant, said, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed." (Matt. 8:5-10.) There is an expression of both faith and hope in the words she immediately added: "And even now I know that, whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give thee." She had not yet grasped the idea that Jesus had power within himself to bring Lazarus back from the dead.

Jesus the Resurrection and the Life (Verses 23-27)

"Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again." She did not get the idea that Jesus would raise him up at that time. She would have got some idea of the resurrection from Dan. 12:2. It is also very likely that Jesus had taught her concerning the resurrection at the last day. "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life." In so saying, Jesus used a figure of speech in which the cause is put for the effect. Jesus is the one who raises the dead—he causes the resurrection. In a similar sense he is the life—he is the source, the cause—of all life, both physical and spiritual. Life inheres in him, and our life is derived from him. "He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live." There is therefore a sense in which a man lives, though he dies. "And whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die. Believest thou this?" We know that the body dies, yet the believer never dies, "Believest thou this?" A materialist does not believe it. He argues against it with all his might. He believes that when a man dies there is not any sense in which he lives. But to that question thousands can answer with Martha, "Yea, Lord." She made this confession: "I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, even he that cometh into the world." She therefore had believed that he was the one who Moses and the prophets had said should come. And so in this conversation two fundamental truths are stated in what seems to be an incidental way, namely, that the spirit of the true believer never

dies, and that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the one foretold by Moses and the prophets. In order to be saved, this fundamental truth must be believed. "Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." "He that disbelieveth shall be condemned." "No one cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Jesus Calls Mary (Verses 28, 29, 32, 33)

If Mary knew that Jesus was near by, it is strange that she did not go out to meet him without an invitation. Jesus would not neglect her; so he would have Mary called to him. Martha "went away, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Teacher is here, and calleth thee." From this statement it appears that Mary had not known that Jesus had come. Besides, when she learned that he had come, she arose promptly, and went to him. Jesus was still outside the village. "The Jews then who were with her in the house, and were consoling her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up quickly and went out, followed her, supposing that she was going unto the tomb to weep there." When she came to Jesus, she fell at his feet in an attitude of worship; she also wept. It is not said that Martha did either. The marginal reading says the word translated means wailing. It may be that Martha was as emotional as Mary, but better able to control her emotions. The silent sufferer may suffer the most, for weeping and wailing are a sort of outlet for the pent-up feelings. At times it is good to weep without restraint—good for the body and the soul. In her weeping Mary made the same statement Martha made: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." It is very likely that they had repeated to each other frequently during the four days since Lazarus died that he would not have died had the Lord been present, and had wondered why the Lord did not come when they sent for him. The Jews also who followed were wailing, as the marginal reading shows. People then did not control their emotions, as people unnaturally do now. But if these Jews were professional mourners, their waiving was mere pretense. Because of all this wailing, Jesus "groaned in the spirit, and was troubled." For "groaned in the spirit" the marginal reading has "was moved with indignation in the spirit." The marginal reading seems better, for "groaned in the spirit" does not convey any clear meaning. There was cause for indignation on the part of Jesus; for these Jews who were wailing, as if in deep sorrow at the death of Lazarus, would gladly kill Jesus. He knew also that these same Jews, the ruling class in Jerusalem, for so is John's use of the term Jews, would soon be plotting to put Lazarus to death so as to destroy a living witness of the power of Jesus over death. (See John 12:9-11.) Such hypocritical pretense stirred Jesus to indignation. He was also troubled because of the sorrowing of his friends, and because of the evil hearts of the Jews.

Weeping with Them That Weep (Verses 34, 35)

Of course Jesus knew where the body of Lazarus was; but to stop so much wailing by getting the people interested in doing something, or, at least, getting them to think of something else, he said, "Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see." Of course it was the friends of Jesus who made that answer, for his enemies would not have been likely to address him as Lord. Then

follows the shortest verse in the Bible, "Jesus wept." He wept silently, for so the word in the original indicates; he did not indulge in wailing, as did the Jews. But this is about the only verse in the Bible that some church members can repeat, and all they see in it is the bare fact that Jesus wept; the significance of that weeping escapes them. The sufferings and sorrows of others touched the heart of Jesus. Sin, with its consequent suffering, also caused Jesus to weep. About a week before his crucifixion, as he was making what is usually referred to as his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, in the midst of that great demonstration, he wept over it. He wept because of the incurable wickedness of the people and because of the unparalleled sufferings that were to come upon them because of their wickedness. And now at the tomb of Lazarus he weeps with those who weep. He was not ashamed to weep; weeping, when there is a cause for weeping, is not a cause for shame. We are exhorted to weep with those that weep. (Rom. 12:15.) The Lord expects us to weep at the loss of loved ones, but he exhorts us not to weep as those who have no hope. Jesus was not weeping because there was no hope.

Lazarus Raised (Verses 38-44)

These Jews who were present were, for the most part, bitter enemies of Jesus, and had but recently sought to kill him. They knew that he had given sight to a man born blind. Now Jesus had an opportunity to demonstrate his power over death in a way that they could not help but see. As Jesus approached the tomb, he was again moved with indignation. He knew that the greater part of these Jews would not believe in him, no matter what proof he gave, but would soon again be plotting his death, and also that of Lazarus. Such wickedness and hypocrisy moved the Son of God to indignation. But he would give them this one more proof of his power, and he would have them take some part in what he was about to do. "Take ye away the stone." Jesus could have moved that stone with a word, but it is God's plan to have people to do what they can. Jesus would have even his enemies to have a part in what he was about to do. Practical Martha protested, "Lord, by this time the body decayeth." The Greek is more emphatic: "... he stinketh." There would be odors from the corpse. Perhaps this is the very thing Jesus wanted these Jews to discover—he wanted them to know the condition of the body, so that the certainty and the greatness of the miracle would be manifested to them. He would make it impossible for them to claim fraud, or to deny the greatness of the miracle, so that further opposition to him on their part would show a perversity of heart that nothing could change. To Martha Jesus said, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" But the unbelieving Jews would not see in this miracle the glory of God; it would only stir them to greater hatred, and cause them to be more determined to put Jesus to death, so perverse were they. (See verses 47-53.) But to the one who weighed the evidence, and therefore believed, the raising of Lazarus would be a glorious manifestation of God's power. Jesus had the stone rolled away before he prayed. He would give these Jews time to know that death and decay were in that tomb; and he would have their thoughts raised to a high degree of expectancy. It was a dramatic moment. Then with eyes uplifted toward heaven, he

prayed to his Father, first thanking the Father that during the past he had heard his prayers. He knew that the Father always heard him; but he had spoken to the Father at this time, so that the multitude might hear, and know that God had sent him and was working through him. Jesus would have the people know that Lazarus came from the tomb at his bidding; so he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." And Lazarus came forth, "bound hand and foot with grave-clothes." This decaying body had suddenly become full of health and vitality. Such a sign of God's presence with Jesus was convincing proof to any but the wholly perverse, that he was what he claimed to be. Many did believe; but others, though recognizing his powers to work miracles, were still determined to put him to death. (Read verses 45-57.)

SOME REFLECTIONS

Let no one sing, "Death is only a dream." Death is an awful reality. Paul calls it an enemy. And if, as some think, death end all, then it is a plunge into nonexistence. In life the infidel has no sure guide; in death he has no comforting promise.

In Jesus humanity and deity united; and like human beings of humbler kind, he had his special friends, with whom he delighted to associate, whose hospitality he enjoyed. It was restful and refreshing to visit them, and likely no home was more pleasant to him than the home of these Bethany friends.' And what an honor and blessing it was to this home to have him as a guest.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Jesus the friend.
How may we now be his friends?
The ideal home.
The Bible teaching on the resurrection.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give the time, place, and persons.
After the speech of last lesson, why did Jesus go away beyond the Jordan?
What word came to him there?
Give the incidents leading up to the printed text of our lesson.

Verses 20-22

Give the contents of verses 20-22.

Verses 23-27

What did Jesus and Martha say about the resurrection?
Who shall never die, and what does that mean?
What confession did Martha make?
What two fundamental truths do we get out of this conversation?

Verses 28, 29, 32, 33

Tell about Mary and her part in the matter.
What is said about some Jews who were present?
Why was Jesus moved with indignation?
What later showed that they were not so much interested in this family?

Verses 34, 35

Give the contents of verses 34, 35.
What is said in the Bible about weeping?

Verses 38-44

Give the contents of verses 38, 39.
Who would see the glory of God?
Why would he have others to move the stone from the tomb?
Why would he want all to know the condition of the body?
What did Jesus then do, and what did he say to Lazarus?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson X—March 7, 1943

JESUS RECEIVING HONOR

John 12:1-16

1 Jesus therefore six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus raised from the dead.

2 So they made him a supper there: and Martha served; but Lazarus was one of them that sat at meat with him.

3 Mary therefore took a pound of ointment of pure nard, very precious, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.

4 But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, that should betray him, Saith,

5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred shillings, and given to the poor?

6 Now this he said, not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and having the bag took away what was put therein.

7 Jesus therefore said, Suffer her to keep it against the day of my burying.

8 For the poor ye have always with you; but me ye have not always.

9 The common people therefore of the Jews learned that he was there: and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

10 But the chief priests took counsel that they might put Lazarus also to death;

11 Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

12 On the morrow a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

13 Took the branches of the palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried out, Hosanna: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.

14 And Jesus, having found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written,

15 Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.

16 These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel." (John 12:13.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 118:21-29.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

March 1.	M	Honor at His Birth (Luke 2:1-14)
March 2.	T	Honor at the Temple (Luke 2:22-32)
March 3.	W	Honor at the Age of Twelve (Luke 2:42-51)
March 4.	T	Honor at His Baptism (Matt. 3:13-17)
March 5.	F	Honor at the Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-8)
March 6.	S	Honored at the House of Simon the Leper (Matt. 26:6-13)
March 7.	S	Honored at Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-11)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 31. Jesus came to Bethany six days before the Passover. It seems that the supper came the next day, Saturday. Then the next day, Sunday, he went into Jerusalem.

Places.—Bethany, and on the way to Jerusalem.

Persons.—Jesus, the disciples, Martha, Mary, Lazarus, the chief priests, and the people.

Lesson Links.—It seems that such a miracle as Jesus performed in raising a man from the dead, whose body had begun to decay, would have caused any sensible person to believe on him. Many did believe on him, but some who were present did not believe on him. These disbelievers felt that the whole body of the Sanhedrin should

be informed, so that they might take some action in the matter. The court was called together. This council was not gathered to investigate reports to see if real miracles had been performed, for they said, "What do we? for this man doeth many signs." They had already made up their minds; they had decided sometime before this that Jesus must be killed. They knew that he did many signs; that they freely confessed. "If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." They feared that Jesus would gain such a following, that he would raise a rebellion against Rome; and they believed that such a move would bring upon them the wrath of the Roman government. Caiaphas made a speech in which he made a prophecy, thinking that he was expressing his own opinion. "So from that day forth they took counsel that they might put him to death. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews, but departed thence into the country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and there he tarried with the disciples." When the time of the Passover drew near, many went up to Jerusalem early to purify themselves before the feast. These discussed among themselves as to whether they thought Jesus would come to the feast, for they knew what the Sanhedrin had commanded. "Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given commandment, that, if any man knew where he was, he should show it, that they might take him."

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

"They Made Him a Supper" (Verses 1, 2)

Jesus was not at all averse to attending feasts. Early in his personal ministry he attended a marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, and aided in that feast by turning water into wine. (John 2:1-11.) When he called Levi, who is also called Matthew, to be one of the group who were traveling with him, "Levi made him a great feast in his house." (Luke 5:27-29.) He also gave some regulations to govern the making of feasts, and for guests at feasts. Now he attended a supper that was made in his honor. Social feasts, if not abused, may be useful in several ways. They give the Christian an opportunity to establish and to cement friendships that will enable him to exercise a good influence. They may be made helpful in contributing toward the building up of good will in the community. And for the time being, they give us rest from the heavier problems of life. This supper is thought by many to be the one told about in Matt. 26:6-13. It is not necessary to discuss that matter here. The student can read what Matthew says, compare it with what John says in this lesson, and form his own conclusion. Whether the two accounts relate to the same feast or not is not a life and death matter with us. This feast was made especially in honor of Jesus, but Lazarus was an honored guest. Martha and Mary were also present. Martha, always businesslike and competent, served. Jesus was in the midst of devoted friends. And who would not like to be in such a company as was there gathered! Well, there will be a gathering one of these days of all the redeemed of all ages, of all countries and climes. And there will be no Judases in that company!

Mary Anoints Jesus (Verse 3)

We can easily see a difference in the dispositions of Martha and Mary, but it is not so easy to analyze the difference. It is evident

that Martha had more business and executive ability; Mary was more quiet, and thought more about the gentler things of life. Martha served; Mary anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped them with the hair of her head; "and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment." This means that the odor of the ointment reached every part of the house. It seems singular that some commentators want to make that a figurative expression. This pound of ointment of pure nard was worth nearly fifty dollars. That such a costly ointment was in the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus seems to show plainly that they were not poor people. Neither Martha nor Lazarus objected to the use Mary made of this ointment; that must have been a very unselfish family.

Judas Iscariot Objects (Verses 4-6)

Judas Iscariot was one of the disciples; in fact, he was an apostle. All hypocrites are pretenders, and Judas was that. He appeared to be shocked at such use of the ointment. "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred shillings, and given to the poor?" If the account given in Matt. 26:6-13 is a record of this same feast, it is plain that the other disciples followed Judas Iscariot's lead in objecting to what they called "this waste." If so, the other disciples did not have the same motive that moved Judas Iscariot. Judas did not care for the poor, but he wanted to make it appear that he was much concerned for the poor, so as to hide his real motive. He was about to sell out to the Jews, and wanted to get his hands on the money for that nard before he went, for he was a thief, "and having the bag took away what was put therein." The marginal reading has, "Or, carried what was put therein." Jesus and his disciples had a common treasury; their needs were supplied by people interested in their work. Judas had that in his charge. It does not seem possible that Jesus would have allowed him to be the treasurer, if he were in the habit of stealing the funds contributed by friends. The marginal reading seems better. Being a thief, and knowing that he would soon sell out to the Jews, he would want to get as much money as possible in that bag; for he would certainly take it with him. He had a good opportunity to take with him all that was in the bag.

"Let Her Alone" (Verses 7, 8)

For "suffer her" the marginal reading has "let her alone." He would have all criticism of her stopped. Her love for the Lord prompted her to make the sacrifice of the precious ointment; the act was an expression of great devotion. She did it against the day of his burial. In Matthew's record we have this: "For in that she poured this ointment upon my body, she did it to prepare me for burial." From this it would seem that Mary knew more of what was coming than did the others. She was more reserved, and of a more serious turn of mind, than many others; Jesus therefore could tell her more about coming events than he could tell to the more radical and impulsive. It does not seem reasonable to say that Jesus was attributing motives to her that she did not have. Jesus would soon be taken away, but there would always be poor people. Jesus, of course, knew the hypocrisy of Judas Iscariot, but did not at this time expose him. To do so would bring criticism upon himself; he would let Judas expose himself.

The Chief Priests Plot to Kill Lazarus (Verses 9-11)

"The common people"—we would think of them as the middle class. They are the ballast in any ship of state—the steadying force in any community or group of people. It was from these that Jesus gained most of his following. On this occasion they came with a double purpose, to see Jesus and also to see Lazarus whom Jesus had raised from the dead. The very poor were too listless to be interested; the authorities were too high-headed and stubborn to recognize anything in which they were not the leaders. Here the high and the low met on common ground—neither was interested in what Jesus did. Lazarus was a living witness of the power of Jesus over death, and the people who saw him would be powerfully influenced. But those in Jerusalem, who considered themselves the rightful leaders of Jewish thought and practice, would not accept anything that did not originate with them; and Jesus was attracting more attention than they could possibly gain. "If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him." This living evidence—this Lazarus whom he raised from the dead—must be destroyed; for "by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed." Kill Lazarus because he was a living witness of the power of Jesus; kill Lazarus to keep people from believing on Jesus! Could perverseness be more perverse? Could the minds and hearts of men be more warped and twisted than were the minds and hearts of these men? A court that was supposed to deal out justice, but itself minus every instinct of justice.

Demonstrations in Honor of Jesus (Verses 12-16)

The student should be sure to read the parallel passages, Matt. 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:29-40. The raising of Lazarus and his being seen by so many after he was raised up had created interest. This accounts in a great measure for the great demonstration that accompanied the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem. A study of the preparations Jesus made for this entrance into Jerusalem seems to show plainly that he was deliberately planning for just such a demonstration as took place. "The chief priests and the Pharisees had given commandment, that, if any man knew where he was, he should show it, that they might take him." These men were expecting Jesus to slip into the city as secretly as possible. They were afraid they would not know he was in the city at all. Well, he would show them himself; he would enter in such a way as to bewilder them. After that they could do whatever they could, but they would know where he was without any reports from spies! So far as we know all his journeys had been made on foot; now he was preparing to ride this short distance into the city. He would not ride into Jerusalem on a horse, the symbol of royalty and war, but upon a lowly ass, more the symbol of peace. The people that had attended the feast mentioned in chapter 11 were present, also those who saw him raise Lazarus from the dead were present. Others who had only heard about this great miracle contributed their part in this great demonstration. "The multitude therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from the dead, bare witness. For this cause also the multitude went and met him, for that they heard that he had done this sign." Previous to this demonstration Jesus had charged his disciples not

to tell that he was the Christ, but now he forbids them not. As they began to go down the slopes of Mount Olivet facing Jerusalem, "the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works which they had seen." (Luke 19:37.) The noise of that shouting would be heard in the city. They spread their garments and palm leaves in his path, and shouted "Hosanna: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel." Other writers give additional words that they shouted. This demonstration utterly bewildered and confused the Pharisees. "The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Behold how ye prevail nothing; lo, the world is gone after him." Now they knew where he was, but did not know what to do about it. Later Judas helped them out. When these disciples shouted their praises, using such expressions as, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David" (Mark 11:9, 10), they thought Jesus was about to begin to reign in Jerusalem; but they then did not understand the nature of his kingdom; nor did they understand till he was glorified, and sent the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth. That occurred on the Pentecost following his crucifixion. "Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." (Acts 2:33-36.)

SOME REFLECTIONS

If a human being has no social instincts and desires, he is not normal. Jesus was human as well as divine; he enjoyed the association of people. It seems that he liked to take part in social gatherings.

Evidence does not compel belief unless a person accepts evidence with an open mind. An overwhelming amount of evidence did not cause the leaders in Jerusalem to believe; they were not hospitable to truth; their minds were closed. They were so smart that they had no practical sense. In shutting their eyes and stopping their ears to evidence, these leaders shut themselves off from the greatest things of this life and of that which is to come.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Our conduct socially.

The uses of the eyes and ears in conversion and Christian living.

What should be our attitude toward the truth?

The exaltation of Jesus.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give the time, places, and persons.

Why did the Jews hold a council?

Why did they want to put Jesus to death?

What command had the leaders given?

Verses 1, 2

Give instances in which Jesus attended feasts.

What good, if any, is there in feasts?

Who were present at the feast of our lesson?

Verse 3

Discuss verse 3.

Verses 4-6

To what was objection raised, by whom, and why?
What was the real reason for the objection?

In what way does the middle class add stability to churches and governments?
What did the leaders decide about Lazarus, and why?

Verses 7, 8

What did Jesus say in reply to the criticism of Judas Iscariot?
Discuss his reply.

Verses 12-16

How did Jesus prepare for his entrance into Jerusalem?
Tell about the ovation given him.
Discuss verse 16.
Discuss the reflections.

Verses 9-11

Lesson XI—March 14, 1943

IN THE UPPER ROOM

John 13:12-20; 14:1-6

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

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

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

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

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

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

18 I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth my bread lifted up his heel against me.

19 From henceforth I tell you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

1 Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me.

2 In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

4 And whither I go, ye know the way.

5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?

6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Pet. 5:1-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

March 8.	M	Upper Room Cleansing (John 13:1-11)
March 9.	T.	Upper Room Consecration (John 13:12-30)
March 10.	W	Upper Room Commandment (John 13:31-38)
March 11.	T	Upper Room Consolation (John 14:1-6)
March 12.	F	Upper Room Promises (John 14:12-23)
March 13.	S	Upper Room Peace (John 14:26-31)
March 14.	S	Upper Room Communion (1 Cot. 11:23-26)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 31, the night in which Jesus was betrayed into the hands of his enemies.

Place.—An upper room in Jerusalem.

Persons.—Jesus and the twelve apostles.

Lesson Links.—A few days before the events of this lesson, two apostles, James and John, had pleaded with Jesus for the highest positions of honor in his kingdom. (Matt. 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45.) Previous to this, the twelve had disputed among themselves as to who was the greatest. (Mark 9:33, 34.) At that time they thought the kingdom of Christ would be a material kingdom, and in it would be positions of honor, as in other kingdoms. By some very plain teaching Jesus sought to get such notions out of their minds. After James and John had tried to get him to promise them places of honor in his kingdom, he called the disciples to him, and said, "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: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister [marginal reading, servant]; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant [bond servant]: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. 20:25-28.) In our present lesson he sets before them in a very forcible way an example of useful, but humble service. How different the church would be, if only all of its members gave full heed to Paul's injunction to do "nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others." (Phil. 2:3, 4.) Have regard for the other fellow's feelings, his convenience, and his welfare; anything less than that is not Christian. Jesus went about doing good, thus setting us an example of service to others. "If any man serve me, let him follow me." (John 12:26.) Jesus loved; therefore he served. Jesus rendered much service in healing the sick, the lame, and the blind; but the most far-reaching service that he rendered was his faithfulness in teaching the pure word of God; in this also he set us an example. "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.)

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Jesus Loved His Own to the End (Verses 12-15)

The Passover was one of the three feasts that all men were required to attend; attendance by the women was voluntary. (Lev. 23:4-43; Deut. 16:1-17.) Jesus, obedient to the law of God, attended the Passover Feast each year. Now he was in Jerusalem to observe his last Passover. For that matter, it was the last Passover that God would require anyone to attend, for the law ended at the cross. (Col. 2:14.) Jesus knew that the time of his departure from this world was at hand. The treatment that he had received, and would receive, at the hands of His own nation, had not embittered nor soured him; he still loved his own. Verse 13: "Ye call me, Teacher, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." Yet the Lord had washed his servants' feet. Now read verse 3; if you read that verse in view of what Jesus was about to do, it takes on added significance. Jesus knew who he was he was not unmindful of his greatness, yet he was about to do a service that was usually performed by a household servant. He did not feel, as people so often feel, that such a lowly

service was beneath his dignity. He would do a needed service, no matter how lowly the service might be; and he prepared for that service as a servant would. One naturally wonders how the disciples felt as Jesus proceeded to this necessary service, which none of them had volunteered to do. We can see something of the way Peter felt. By the time Jesus got to him, Peter was full of shame and indignation that the others would have Jesus wash their feet. "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter." Of course Peter knew that Jesus was washing feet, but he did not understand the significance of the performance. Peter said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." But that was putting his will up against the Lord's will; so the Lord said, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." That brought Peter to a realization of his rashness. If it would please the Lord to do so, he was willing for him to wash his hands and his head. Then Jesus said, "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet." They had bathed in preparation for the feast; but their feet had become soiled in coming to the place of the feast, and needed washing. Jesus was therefore rendering a needed service, but only their feet needed the washing. Herein is where all religious people who wash feet as a church ordinance miss the significance of what Jesus did. When these people wash feet as a church ordinance, they are very particular to see that their feet do not need washing! Jesus washed feet that needed washing, we should be willing to do the same thing. The lesson of the incident is that we should be ready for any needed service, however lowly it might be. The member of the church who is too dignified to do a lowly service for the poorest of the land is too high-headed to be a Christian. Jesus set the example of lowly service; we must follow his example. This brings forward the question of verse 12: "Know ye what I have done to you?" If you think he was setting an example for a religious ceremony, you do not know what he did. He was not merely teaching a lesson of humility; he was teaching them by example to do the needed thing.

The Relation of Lord and Servant (Verses 16, 17)

The lord of any servant is over and above the servant; that is especially true concerning our Lord and his servants. A Christian must not feel that he is above doing what his Lord did. A servant of God must be willing to do what is needed without thinking of his dignity; if he is as big as he should be, he will. The phrase, "one that is sent," is a translation of one Greek word, "apostle." The Lord's apostles were not greater than he. The lesson, therefore, is they are not too great to render the lowest service. "If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them." It does one no good to know what he should do, if he does not do it. The blessedness is in doing, not merely in believing or knowing.

Jesus Speaks of His Coming Betrayal (Verses 18-20)

"I speak not of you all." He had not included Judas Iscariot in what he had just said. It seems that Judas made his decision to betray Jesus the night of the supper at the house of Simon the leper. He was annoyed and greatly disappointed that Mary used a pound of precious ointment for anointing Jesus instead of selling it, and

putting the proceeds in the bag, so that he might make way with it. "Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said, What are ye willing to give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they weighed unto him thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to deliver him unto them." (See Matt. 26:14-16.) Therefore when they came to this Passover, the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus. Jesus of course knew all of this. Jesus quotes Psalm 41:9 as having its fulfillment in the betrayal of Christ by Judas. And the quotation shows the baseness of Judas. Jesus was the host at this supper; Judas was a guest; and yet, having learned where Jesus would go after the supper, he arose from the supper and went to arrange for his arrest. And he did this base deed for thirty pieces of silver, in amount, about fifteen dollars. We think of him as selling his Lord for that pitiful sum; but in doing so he sold himself to do evil. He sold out, body and soul, to the devil. And so does anyone who does wrong for gain. In telling them what was coming, he was showing prophetic foresight. When it all occurred as he had said, then the disciples would believe in him. He had told them this that it might increase their faith. Then he makes a statement that people are slow to accept at its full value. "He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." To receive the one he sent is to receive his teaching. Jesus makes that plain in what he said on another occasion: "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.) There is therefore no way to receive Christ and the Father save to receive the teaching of those whom Christ sent. The remaining part of the thirteenth chapter should be carefully read.

"Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled" (John 14:1-3)

In all ages since these words were uttered people have drawn comfort from them. At that time the disciples were in special need of comfort. Jesus had started a questioning among them when he told them plainly that one of them would betray him. He did not tell them how soon that would be, and none of them could be sure as to what he might do in the distant future, excepting Judas; he knew what he was about to do, and yet he had the effrontery to chime in with the rest, "Is it I, Lord?" He had spoken of his going away, and had said to Peter, "The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice." (John 13:38.) They were bewildered and full of sorrow. And though Jesus was all but crushed with the thought of what he himself was about to suffer, he sought to comfort his distressed disciples. "Believe in God, believe also in me." The marginal reading has "Ye believe in God." Both verbs in the Greek may be either indicative or imperative. The circumstances must alone determine which it must be. To make them imperative gives this idea: Instead of being troubled, believe in God and in me; trust us to bring things out for the best. Or if we adopt the equally correct translation, "Ye believe in God, and ye believe in me," it would carry this idea: You believe in God, and you believe in me; you should not therefore be troubled; you should therefore believe we will do the right thing by you. He assures them also, that his going away was for their benefit. You will follow later, and I am therefore going to prepare a place for you. "In my Father's house are many

mansions." Jesus would prepare a place for them in those mansions. Later he would come again and receive them unto himself, that they might be with him in the eternal world. The plain implication of the language is that they would continue to be with him where he was then going. And that should be glory enough to satisfy any human heart.

Jesus the Way, the Truth, and the Life (Verses 4-6)

"And whither I go, ye know the way." He had frequently told them the way he was to go. He would go by way of death by crucifixion at the hands of his enemies and a resurrection from the dead—by the way of a cruel crucifixion and a glorious resurrection. This had been so often repeated to them that they should have known it; but their minds had been too full of the idea that Jesus would never die, but reign in Jerusalem forever, to be impressed by what Jesus had said as to the manner of his going. So Thomas, speaking for all, said, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?" To tell them again at that time would be useless; now they needed to know the way they must go, if they would be where he was going. "I am the way." He is the way both in the example he set and in the teaching he did, and would do through his apostles. There is no other way for man. "And the truth." All truth centers in him, and radiates from him; and there is nothing but truth in his life and teaching. "And the life." Life inheres in him, and he is the source of all life. He is therefore the true way to life. He therefore says, "No one cometh unto the Father, but by me." He is our only way of approach to the Father, the only mediator between God and man. "For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all." (1 Tim. 2:5, 6.) The one God has appointed one way of approach to himself. And Christ, who is the way, says, "He that rejecteth me rejecteth him that sent me." (Luke 10:16.) To reject this one way to the Father is to leave one in sin; "for except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24.) He is therefore our only way of escape from sin; through him we have access into the favor of God. (Rom. 5:1, 2.)

SOME REFLECTIONS

The disciples were human; so men are today. Like the disciples they seek places of preferment. But such is worldly, not Christlike. Were you ever a candidate, or an applicant, for a paying place, against a brother in Christ? Did your conscience feel at ease in the matter? A dozen or more preachers in a fevered scramble, each one striving against the others, to be "the minister" of a large church—what a mockery of the spirit of Christ! Neither is fit to be considered.

People spend much time and energy in worrying about things that are entirely in the hands of God. We worry about the weather; we worry about world affairs; we worry about how God will work out his plans as to the final windup of all earthly matters. If we believe in God and in Christ, why worry?

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The evils of striving for places of honor.
A discussion of washing feet.
The evils of worrying.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Discuss verses 16, 17.

Lesson Settings

Give the time, place, and persons.

What wrong ambition did the apostles have?

What lesson do you get out of what Jesus said to them on that point?

What should be our attitude toward others?

Verses 18-20

Who was not included in what Jesus had just said?

Give facts about Judas.

What did Jesus quote from one of the Psalms?

Discuss verse 20.

John 14:1-3

Quote verses 1-3.

Why should they not be troubled?

Verses 12-15

What was the Passover, and how often did it come?

Discuss the incidents recorded in verses 1-11.

Why was foot washing a social custom?

Why did Jesus wash the disciples' feet?

What lesson is there in it to us?

Verses 4-6

Why were the disciples so slow to believe Jesus as to his death on the cross?

Repeat and discuss verse 6.

Give some scriptures on Christ as the mediator.

Discuss the reflections.

Verses 16, 17

Lesson XII—March 21, 1943

OUR LORD'S INTERCESSORY PRAYER

John 17:1-8, 18-26

1 These things spake Jesus; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee:

2 Even as thou gavest him authority over all flesh, that to all whom thou hast given him, he should give eternal life.

3 And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ.

4 I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do.

5 And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

6 I manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them to me; and they have kept thy word.

7 Now they know that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are from thee:

8 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.

18 As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

20 Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word;

21 That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me.

22 And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one;

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me.

24 Father, I desire that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

25 O righteous Father, the world knew thee not, but I know thee; and these knew that thou didst send me;

26 And I made known unto them thy name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are." (John 17:11.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Heb. 7:23-28.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

March 15.	M	The Intercessor and the Father (John 17:1-8)
March 16.	T	Intercession for the Twelve (John 17:9-19)
March 17.	W	Intercession for Future Disciples (John 17:20-26)
March 18.	T	Intercession for Peter (Luke 22:31-34)
March 19.	F	The Ever-Living Intercessor (Heb. 7:23-28)
March 20.	S	The Throne of Grace (Heb. 4:11-16)
March 21.	S	"Lord, Teach Us to Pray" (Luke 11:1-4)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 31—the night in which Christ was betrayed into the hands of his enemies.

Place.—An upper room in Jerusalem.

Persons.—Jesus and his disciples.

Lesson Links.—The incidents of the last lesson and the prayer of this lesson all occurred the same night, the night in which Jesus was betrayed into the hands of his enemies. On that night Jesus made quite a lengthy speech, then uttered the prayer which we study in this lesson. The other writers recorded neither the speech nor the prayer. John did not mention the institution of the Lord's Supper. He recorded what the others did not. It seems that the apostles had become convinced that Jesus would soon leave them. "But because I have spoken these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart." But he would not leave them desolate; yet they could hardly see how his going away would be expedient for them. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you." (Read carefully John 16:6-13.) The Holy Spirit was to be to the apostles more than a Comforter; for he was to guide them into all truth, and through them convince, or convict, the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He would also bring to their remembrance all that Jesus had said to them. (John 14:26.) Before Jesus uttered the prayer of our lesson, he spoke these words to the disciples: "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:32, 33.) This implies that he had overcome Satan, for Satan is the prince of this world. (John 12:31.)

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Jesus Given Authority Over All Flesh (Verses 1-3)

"Lifting up his eyes to heaven." Jesus did not pray with his head bowed toward the earth, but with his face turned toward heaven his eyes lifted up to heaven. That seems to be the natural

and proper thing to do when one prays, though it is not usually so done. The way the Lord addressed the Father is worthy of note, simply, Father. In the body of the prayer we also have Holy Father, also righteous Father; but never here, nor in any prayers recorded in the Bible, do we have any terms expressive of intimacy or endearment, such as are sometimes used today. "The hour is come"—the hour for which he came into the world. It was a solemn hour. The burden of the world's sins was resting upon him; he was standing, as it were, under the shadow of the cross. It will help you to study this prayer with your mind dwelling on the occasion in which it was uttered. "Glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee." When Jesus was glorified, the Holy Spirit would be given. (John 7:39.) "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.) This therefore was the answer to the prayer of Jesus. The Father was glorified in what Jesus did and is doing. The Father had given the Son authority over all flesh; in fact, he gave him all authority in heaven and on earth. (Matt. 28:18.) He actually gave him this authority "when he raised him from the dead, and 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.) "He is the head of the body, the church: . . . that in all things he might have the preeminence." (Col. 1:18.) Life is in him, and he has the authority to give eternal life to whom he will, but he is the author of eternal salvation only to those who obey him. (Heb. 5:8, 9.) To know God is to recognize him as God, the one who has the right to command; we recognize that right by giving him faithful obedience. Jesus is the Savior, but he will not save any in whose heart he is not allowed to reign as king.

Jesus Accomplished His Mission (Verses 4, 5)

Jesus glorified the Father on the earth in that he did all that the Father sent him to do. Had he failed in one thing, he could not have said he had accomplished the work which the Father gave him to do. He came to do what the Father through the prophets said he would do. In spite of man's theories, let us believe that Jesus told the truth; Jesus did the work he was sent to do. In so doing he glorified the Father. A person is glorified in the full accomplishment of the work which he inaugurates, also in the successful working out of his plans. God's plans did not fail of accomplishment. In verse 5 Jesus again prays that the Father would glorify him, this time praying to be glorified with the Father with the glory he had before the world was. That goes beyond our grasp, excepting that it shows Jesus existed before the world was created.

Jesus Gave God's Words to the Apostles (Verses 6-8)

In the first five verses Jesus prayed for himself; then to the close of verse 19 he prayed for his apostles. God had given him these apostles for a definite work; this work was announced in the

Great Commission. It seems plain that God Dad first called these men through the preaching of John the Baptist; for the ones who were baptized in the Holy Spirit on Pentecost had been baptized by John. (See Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:21, 22; 2:1-4, 14.) Of the converts God made through the preaching of John, God gave these men to Jesus to be his apostles. Jesus manifested his Father's name to them; he brought it into full light. "A little of the divine nature was known by the works of creation; a little more was known by the Mosaic revelation; but the full manifestation of God, his nature and his attributes, came only through the revelation of Christ."—Clark. No higher words of praise could have been spoken concerning these men than this: "And they have kept thy word." That covers all the relations with God, with Christ, and with their fellow men; and their attitude toward God's word made it possible for Jesus to say concerning them, "Now they know that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are from thee." For he had given them the words which God had given him, and they had accepted them as true. By his works and the words delivered to them they knew that he came from God, and believed that God sent him. Here the words know and believe are used in much the same sense; they knew he came from God, and believed that God sent him.

God Sent Jesus—Jesus Sent the Apostles (Verses 18, 19)

Jesus made no bid for worldly honor and praise. He did not seek to impress the people with the idea that he, in and of himself, was attempting to do great things for them. He did not even claim that his coming into the world was of his own volition. Said he, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work." (John 4:34.) "I can of myself do nothing: . . . because I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (John 5:30.) Jesus made many similar statements, several of them in his prayer. John states the reason the Father sent the Son into the 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." (John 3:16.) Now Jesus was to send his apostles into the world. So certain would that be done that it is here spoken of as an accomplished fact. Things that are certain of accomplishment are frequently spoken of as if they had already been done. The word "apostle," means "one sent away." Jesus called these men apostles because he was to send them out to preach. "For their sakes I sanctify myself." He devoted himself to God, for so the word signifies. Jesus did not live a worldly life, but a life wholly devoted to the service of God. In doing so, he set them an example, that they too might be sanctified, or devoted, to God. In verse 17 Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth." It is the power of the word of truth brought to bear on the hearts of people that causes them to devote their lives to the service of God; it is in that way that God sanctifies people.

Jesus Prays for the Unity of Believers (Verses 20-23)

Jesus had been praying for the apostles. In going out to face a world of enemies they would need God's help and encouragement. But now he prays for their converts—for all who would believe on him through their word. He prayed especially that they might be

one—united perfectly in one body. Read what Paul says about the strife and divisions that were springing up in the church at Corinth. (1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3:3, 4; 11:17-19.) David said, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1.) So desirable and helpful is this unity that the Lord hates even abominates the one who sows discord among his brethren. (Prov. 6:16-19.) To secure and to maintain this unity that is so desirable, all Christians are required to make an effort. They are commanded to give "diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph. 4:3.) But it must be a unity which the Spirit teaches, and not a unity in error. In fact, Christians are required to turn away from those who cause divisions contrary to the doctrine of Christ. (Rom. 16:17, 18.) "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God." (Matt. 5:9.) Division among the followers of Christ hinders the spiritual growth and development of the members; it even destroys the Christian character of those who are responsible for the divisions. It hinders the progress of the gospel. Hence Jesus prayed that believers might be one, "that the world may believe that thou didst send me." In hindering belief in Christ it hinders the salvation of sinners. Jesus prayed for a unity that the world could see and know that it existed a union in one body. The one who causes or perpetuates divisions in the followers of Christ antagonizes the prayer of Jesus. The one who hinders the prayer of Jesus is in effect an enemy of Christ, no matter what his professions and pretensions may be. "And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them." The glory here referred to is expressed in the next clause "that they may be one, even as we are one." The unity of Father and Son is one of their glorious attributes. And nothing on earth can be more glorious than for the great host of Christians to be one. What a glorious thing a harmonious and united church is, a church where good will and warmhearted fellowship prevails! Professed followers of Christ have miserably failed to maintain that unity for which Jesus prayed, because they have failed to follow his teaching. But it is the Lord's earnest prayer "that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me." This solemn and earnest prayer of our Lord should admonish us to do all we can in harmony with the truth to promote unity among the followers of Christ. Think of the one who uttered this prayer and the occasion on which it was uttered, and then examine yourself. It is an awful sin to cause division among the followers of Christ; it is a lovely thing to make peace.

Jesus Prays That His Disciples Be with Him (Verses 24-26)

Jesus did not pray for the Father to take his disciples out of the world at the time he would be taken out (verse 15), for he had trained them for a great work which they were soon to begin; but they, like all other men, would soon reach the end of life's journey. Jesus prayed that they might then be with him, and behold his glory. That reward would infinitely more than repay them for what they would have to go through in this life. The world had not known God; the world by its wisdom cannot know God. (1 Cor. 1:21.) He can be known now only as he is revealed to us in the Bible. The apostles had been slow to learn many things Jesus had often repeated to

them, but they had come to know that the Father had sent Jesus into the world. Jesus had taught them much about the Father, and now prays that God's love might be in them, and that he also might be in them.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Some people have become so materialistic that they think God cannot answer prayers without working miracles. Now notice some of the things Jesus prayed for, and see if you think he expected them to be brought about by miracles. He prayed that the apostles might be one. Do you think he expected that to be maintained by a perpetual miracle? He prayed that they might be kept from evil. Does anyone think he expected God to keep them out of sin by a perpetual miracle? "Sanctify them." If that prayer was answered, was it done by miracle? And he prayed for all believers to be one. Jesus did not expect this oneness to be maintained by miracle. If so, then he expected miracles to continue as long as there are believers in the world.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

How the Holy Spirit helped the apostles.
How the truth sanctifies people.
Unity, and how maintained.
The evils of division.

QUESTIONS

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

What words of praise did he speak concerning the apostles?

Lesson Settings

Give the time, place, and persons.
What did Jesus say about his going away and sending the Holy Spirit?
Discuss verses 32 and 33 of chapter 16.

Verses 18, 19

Give some statements Jesus made concerning his coming into the world.
What prompted God to send him into the world?
Discuss the meaning of sanctify.

Verses 1-3

Discuss the terms that should be used in addressing God in prayer.
Show when Jesus was glorified.
Discuss the authority given the Son of God.

Verses 20-23

In what verses is recorded the prayer for the apostles?
For whom does he now pray?
Discuss his prayer for unity.
Give some teaching on that subject.
In this matter, who is an enemy of Christ?
What would constitute a glorious church?

Verses 4, 5

How did Jesus glorify the Father?
Discuss the statement, I have "accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do."

Verses 24-26

Discuss verses 24-26.
Discuss the reflections.

Verses 6-8

Discuss verse 6.

Lesson XIII—March 28, 1943

THE APPEARANCES AFTER THE RESURRECTION

John 20:19-31

19 When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

20 And when he had said this, he showed unto them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord.

21 Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit:

23 Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didimus, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.

26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing.

28 Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

29 Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

30 Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book:

31 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.

GOLDEN TEXT—"I am alive for evermore." (Rev. 1:18.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 16.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

March 22.	M	Appearance to Ten Apostles (John 20:19-23)
March 23.	T	Appearance to Eleven Apostles (John 20:24-29)
March 24.	W	Appearance to Two Disciples (Luke 24:27-35)
March 25.	T	Appearance to Seven Apostles (John 21:1-7)
March 26.	F	Appearance to Paul (Acts 9:1-9)
March 27.	S	Witnesses Of the Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-8)
March 28.	S	"Christ the Firstfruits" (1 Cor. 15:20-26)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 31. Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week. On the evening of that day, after having been seen by some of the disciples, he appeared to the assembled apostles, Thomas being absent. On the first day of the next week he appeared to them again, Thomas being present.

Place.—The apostles were evidently in Jerusalem at the time first mentioned in our lesson; they may have been in Jerusalem when Jesus appeared to them eight days later, though they may have been at Bethany. They had not yet gone into Galilee.

Persons.—Jesus and his disciples. It seems that Jesus did not appear to any but his disciples after his resurrection. "Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead." (Acts 10:40, 41.)

Lesson Links.—After the prayer, which we studied in our last lesson, he went with his disciples out of the city, across the brook Kidron, into a garden on the slopes of Mount Olivet, where he was

seized and led away to his mock trials. Matters then proceeded rapidly to the climax of his resurrection on the third day after his crucifixion. "The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, 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: to whom he also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God." (Acts 1:1-3.) It was necessary that these witnesses be chosen to be the personal followers of Christ, that they might become so thoroughly acquainted with him that they could not be mistaken as to his identity. To be sure of their ability to identify him after his resurrection, it was necessary that they get more than a glimpse of him after his resurrection. Hence he appeared to them under various circumstances during a period of forty days after his resurrection. They therefore could not have been mistaken, and they gave their lives as evidence of the sincerity of their testimony. The student should read carefully the first eighteen verses of the twentieth chapter of John, and also the parallel passages in Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Jesus Appears to the Apostles (Verses 19, 20)

There is some difficulty in determining the order of events of the day of the resurrection; but we are told that on that day Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9), to Simon Peter, and to two disciples on their way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-34). The apostles had seen what befell their master, and they feared for their lives; so when night came on, they were assembled in a room with the doors shut for fear of the Jews. However at that time they were in no danger from the Jews; for, having killed Jesus, they would naturally expect his disciples to go home and take up their old occupations. But the disciples could not know to what cruelties the rage of the Jews would carry them; so they hid as best they could. From Luke we learn that the two disciples who had seen Jesus on their journey to Emmaus had returned, and were telling the disciples who were assembled in that room how Jesus "was known of them in the breaking of the bread," when Jesus suddenly stood in their midst, and said to them, "Peace be unto you." They were too terrified at the moment to speak. "But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit." (Luke 24:37.) To convince them that it was he, and thus to allay their fears, he said to them, "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." (Luke 24:39.) From this incident we learn that the apostles did not hold with the Sadducees, but believed in the existence of spirits; the Sadducees were materialists, and did not believe in the existence of spirits. The language of Jesus shows that

the disciples had the correct idea, for he said, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having." To deny that spirits do exist out of a body is to deny the words of Jesus. If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you believe what he says. When Jesus showed the disciples the wounds in his hands, in his feet, and in his side, their fear gave way to faith and gladness; they knew then that they were not seeing a disembodied spirit, but their own beloved Lord. Their Lord whom they had loved and mourned was with them again.

The Great Commission (Verses 21-23)

Having quieted their fears, Jesus again said to them, "Peace be unto you." This and similar expressions are often found in the Bible. It was a sort of combined salutation and prayer—a prayer for God's peace to be with the one saluted. Paul speaks of the peace of God that passes all understanding. (Phil. 4:7.) They could have peace with God even in the midst of raging enemies. The last clause in verse 21 begins John's report of the Great Commission. "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." During the forty days between his resurrection and ascension, Jesus often appeared to his apostles, "speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God." We are too prone to think that Jesus, in a few words, announced on one occasion the Great Commission, and then said no more about it; but a little reflection will convince one that Jesus, in speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God, was dwelling at length on what is contained in a condensed form in the Great Commission. All the things concerning the kingdom of God are contained in the Great Commission. John's record of the Great Commission is the substance of a speech made on the night following the resurrection of Christ. The other writers record what he said on other occasions. In John's account Jesus does not formally state his authority as he does in Matthew's account, his authority is clearly implied in what he said. He had the authority to send the apostles, and to confer on them great power and authority. When Jesus breathed on the apostles, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit," he was not conferring upon them the Holy Spirit at that moment; for in Luke's record of the commission, Jesus told them to tarry in Jerusalem till they were endued with power from on high. And in Acts 1:4, 5, Luke records Jesus as saying that they would be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence; this would give them power, or authority, to begin their work. And we learn from Acts 2:1-4 that the Holy Spirit came to them on Pentecost. They therefore did not receive the Holy Spirit the moment Jesus said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." That was a promise of what was to come; the second chapter of Acts shows its fulfillment. When Jesus promised Peter the keys of the kingdom, he added, " whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. 16:19.) But in the interview here recorded by John the same authority is conferred on all

the apostles. "Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." A man, in and of himself, cannot forgive a sin that has been committed against another; but guided by the Holy Spirit the apostles could, and did, lay down the terms on which God would remove sins from others. In this sense they forgave sins. If a person would not obey their teaching, his sins were retained—he was not forgiven. Here is an unanswerable argument for the conditionality of salvation. Paul, though called to the apostleship out of season, had all the powers possessed by the others. "For I reckon that I am not a wait behind the very chiefest apostles." (2 Cor. 11:5.) "In nothing was I behind the very chiefest apostles." (2 Cor. 12:11.)

Thomas Disbelieved the Other Apostles (Verses 24, 25)

Thomas, one of the twelve, was not present when Jesus first appeared to the assembled group. When later they met up with Thomas, they told him that they had seen the Lord, and that he was alive, but he did not believe them. There is no indication that he accused them of trying to deceive him. It is more likely that he thought they were too ready to believe, and had merely seen some apparition; but he did not propose to be so easily deceived he would have to have evidence that could not be mistaken. He would not, SO he thought, accept the evidence of his eyes. He must not only see Jesus with the wounds in his hands and side, but he must also put his fingers in the nail-prints in his hands and thrust his hand into the wound in his side; otherwise he would not believe. People so often refer to him as "Doubting Thomas"; but he did not doubt, he disbelieved. But even so, he was not so different from the others; for when Jesus appeared to them, they thought they were seeing a spirit. He had to show them his wounds, and ask them to handle him, and see that it was he, and not a spirit. (Luke 24:26-43.) It seems unfair to Thomas to make him out worse than the others. Thomas wanted to be sure of the evidence.

Thomas Is Convinced (Verses 26-29)

In the language of the Jews, after eight days meant on the eighth day, or after eight days had come. When the people begged Rehoboam to make their burdens lighter than they had been under Solomon's reign, he said to them, "Come again unto me after three days." (2 Chron. 10:5.) But verse twelve tells us that they came to him the third day, "as the king bade, saying, Come to me again the third day." They counted the day from which the count began. As Jesus met with the group in the closed room on the first day of the week, the day of the resurrection, "after eight days" would he the first day of the next week. At this appearance Thomas was present. Jesus knew what Thomas had said, so he invited him to make the test that he had said he would have to make before he would believe, and added, "Be not faithless, but believing." It is not clear whether or not Thomas made the test he demanded, but

it seems that he did not, and that he was not so hard to convince as he thought he would be, and that he did not hesitate to say, "My Lord and my God." The incident shows that it is not true that faith is lost in sight; for Jesus said to him, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed." But many must believe on the testimony of those who did see him; hence Jesus added, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

Miracles as Signs (Verses 30, 31)

What is a miracle? You will find it difficult to tell in exact terms what a miracle is; yet if we had seen the great works Jesus performed, we would readily recognize them as miracles. Some miracles are called signs, signs of God's presence with the person through whom, or in connection with whom, they were wrought; but some miracles were not signs. The creation of all things was a series of great miracles, but they were not signs of God's presence with anyone. The final end of all things worldly will be the result of great miracles, but none of them will be signs. To say that miracles have ceased is to forget the resurrection and the destruction of the world. Signs ceased when their need ceased; their purpose was to confirm the word—that was their sole purpose. (Mark 16:19, 20; John 3:2; Heb. 2:3, 4.) Jesus did many signs which John did not record. None of the writers told about all the signs which Jesus did. In recording the few, they had in view the same thing that moved John to write; namely, "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name." John plainly states the purpose of his writing, namely, that people might have life-eternal life—in the name of Christ; "for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." (Acts 4:12.) But people must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, in order to have life in his name; "for except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24.) But no one can believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, if he has never heard of him. (Rom. 10:14.) John therefore wrote, so that people might have enough knowledge of Christ and his works to enable them to believe in him. Not so many years ago, faith that came from reading the testimony given in the Bible was called "historic faith" by many people. They said such faith was of no value toward saving the soul; but that notion directly contradicts the testimony given by John. Aside from what is written, it is impossible to believe.

SOME REFLECTIONS

The first day of the week is peculiarly the Lord's day, just as the commemorative supper is peculiarly the Lord's Supper. Both are devoted to him.

The apostles were practical men. Some were fishermen; one, a tax collector. Both callings teach a man not to believe all he hears.

The fact that it took the clearest evidence to convince them that Jesus had risen makes their testimony absolutely reliable.

We cannot believe in anything or anybody that we know nothing about. We would not know the things that God provided for them that love him, if the Holy Spirit had not revealed them to us. (1 Cor. 2:9-13.) We would not know anything of Christ and his salvation, if we had no Bible.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The apostles as witnesses.
The Lord's day and the Lord's Supper.
The keys of the kingdom.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give the time, place, and persons.
Discuss matters in lesson links.

Verses 19, 20

Tell about the appearances on the day of his resurrection.
Why did the apostles at night gather in a closed room?
Tell about the entrance of Jesus into the room, and the conversation.
What shows that neither the apostles nor Jesus were materialists?

Verses 21-23

How does the words of Jesus to the apostles imply authority?
What did Jesus talk to the apostles about during the forty days?

How did the apostles bind and loose sins?
When did they receive the Holy Spirit?
What shows that all the apostles, including Paul, had the same authority that Peter had?
Discuss the Great Commission.

Verses 24, 25

What did Thomas say about believing?
Is it correct to call him "Doubting Thomas"?

Verses 26-29

On what day did Jesus appear again to the apostles?
What did Jesus and Thomas say?

Verses 30, 31

Can you define a miracle?
What miracles are called signs?
What miracles have ceased?
Repeat verses 30, 31.
Discuss these verses.
Discuss the reflections.

MAP LINK

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SECOND QUARTER

LIFE AND LETTERS OF PETER AND OF JOHN

AIM: To find, through a study of the lives and letters of Peter and John, help for Christian living today.

Lesson I—April 4, 1943

PETER AND JOHN BECOME DISCIPLES OF JESUS

John 1:29-42; Mark 1:16-20

29 On the morrow he seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!

30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man who is become before me: for he was before me.

31 And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, for this cause came I baptizing in water.

32 And John bare witness, saying, I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon him.

33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize in water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit.

34 And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 10:6-15.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

March 29.	M	John the Baptist Introduces Jesus (John 1:29-34)
March 30.	T	Andrew Brings His Brother to Jesus (John 1:35-42)
March 31.	W	Called to Discipleship (Mark 1:16-20)
April 1.	T	The Call of Levi (Mark 2:13-17)
April 2.	F	Disciples Witnessing for Christ (John 1:43-51)
April 3.	S	Jesus as a Soul Winner (John 4:5-10, 27-29)
April 4.	S	Ready for Service (Isa. 6:1-8)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For John 1:29-42, probably A.D. 27; for Mark 1:16-20, probably A.D. 28. Mark skips all that occurred between the temptation of Jesus and the beginning of his Galilean ministry.

Places.—The region where John was baptizing; also the coast of the Sea of Galilee.

Persons.—Jesus, John the Baptist, Peter, Andrew, James, and John.

Lesson Links.—For the fullest account of the baptism of Jesus read Matt. 3:13-17. That was a wonderful scene—John, the greatest of men, was the administrator, Jesus was the subject; the Holy Spirit honored the act by descending on Jesus; and the Father spoke his pleasure saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." It seems that immediately after his baptism Jesus entered on his forty days of temptation. In the meantime John's preaching attracted so much attention that the authorities at Jerusalem thought it necessary to inquire into John's work. They therefore sent a committee down to make inquiry of John. To this committee he confessed that he was not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet, but was a voice crying in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord." He said also: "In the midst of you standeth one whom ye know not." (John 1:19-27.) It would seem from this that Jesus had already returned from his days of temptation.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON**John Points Out Jesus (John 1:29, 30)**

"On the morrow." That was the next day after John was questioned by the committee of priests and Levites, which had been sent by the Pharisees in Jerusalem. As Jesus was coming to John, John said to the people, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" John's statement is worthy of note. He did not say "sins of the world," but "sin of the world." The sin of the world is unbelief, a lack of confidence and trust in the wisdom, power, and goodness of God. The Romans trusted in their government, the Greeks trusted in their philosophy, and the Pharisees trusted in their own righteousness; none of these trusted in God. Jesus would take away that sin by leading men back to God. That was the purpose of his coming; but even now, so few people realize their need of God. And because people have turned away from God and ceased to trust him, the world is sunk in sin and suffering. The world is now conscious of its suffering, but does not know how to recover itself. That Jesus is here called the Lamb of God suggests the fact that he was to be the sacrifice for sin. Only he can take away the sin of the world; there is no substitute. Only on the grounds that John recognized Jesus as deity can his statement be counted consistent: "After me cometh a man who is become before me: for he was before me." He existed before John, for he was in the beginning with God; but his active personal ministry followed John's. Not in the least degree did John try to exalt himself, but acknowledged the superiority of the one that was coming after him.

How John Knew Jesus Was the Son of God (Verses 31-34)

"I knew him not." Yet when Jesus came to John for baptism, John said to him, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest

thou to me?" (Matt. 3:14.) John must have known that Jesus was a good man. Elisabeth, the mother of John, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, were kinspeople, and knew each other. (Luke 1:36.) If they were not in the habit of visiting each other, they must have met in Jerusalem when they attended the feasts. It is therefore almost certain that Jesus and John had often met, and were acquainted. John did not know Jesus to be the Son of God. One may be acquainted with another and yet not know him. One of the purposes of John's baptism was to make Christ manifest to the world. He came to make ready a people for the Lord, and to introduce the Lord to the people. When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit came upon him in visible form—"he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him." (Matt. 3:16.) John also saw "the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon him." To John this was infallible proof that this Jesus whom he had just baptized was the Son of God, though he had not before known this; for previous to this event God had said to John, "Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit. And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." John knew not therefore till he had baptized him that this Jesus, his kinsman, was the Son of God. One wonders how John felt as he baptized each man, wondering if this man is the one upon whom the Holy Spirit will descend. But when he did baptize the coming one, the proof that he was the Son of God left no room for doubt; John then knew him to be the Son of God. John then knew that his fame would decrease as the fame of the Son of God increased, yet he did not feel resentful, but rather rejoiced, saying, "But the friend of the bridegroom, that standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is made full. He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:29, 30.) John was not ambitious for fame; he is worthy of imitation.

Two of John's Disciples Follow Jesus (Verses 35-37)

"Again on the morrow"—the next day after John gave his testimony recorded in verses 29-34. Two of John's disciples were with him, and heard him again bear witness to Jesus, saying, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" Jesus was walking near by when this was said. "And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus." There were then two ways in which people might follow Jesus; they might follow him in his travels, and they might follow his teaching. These two disciples then followed Jesus in a literal sense, and later became followers of him in his teaching. It is in this latter sense that we can now follow Jesus; and in this sense we must follow him, if we ever go where he is.

"What Seek Ye?" (Verses 38, 39)

When Jesus said to the two disciples that were following him, "What seek ye?" they did not give him a direct answer. Perhaps they had nothing very definite in their minds; so they parried the question by asking Jesus where he was abiding. It is evident that they wanted to form a close acquaintance with him; what they expected to get out of that acquaintance could not at that time have been clear in their minds. What John had said about Jesus

made them want to know him, and they were following him that they might come to know him. Jesus invited them to come and see where he was abiding. And we can well imagine that these two disciples were made glad by such a gracious invitation• A record of the conversation on that day between the three would be interesting; though to know what was said is not essential to our salvation• But these disciples went away from that interview firmly convinced that Jesus was the Messiah.

Andrew and Peter (Verses 48-42)

Being fully convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, Andrew hastened to find his brother Simon to make to him the glad announcement, "We have found the Messiah." Many prophecies, too numerous to discuss here, had foretold the coming of a Savior, a redeemer, a king—the Messiah, or Christ. That is the reason John's announcement that the kingdom of heaven was at hand created such great interest. "The people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply he were the Christ•" (Luke 3:15.) That is the reason the Pharisees sent the committee to make inquiry of John himself• (John 1:19-27.) Now the two disciples, humble fishermen, had found the Messiah. The other disciple, not named by the writer, is thought to have been John the writer. What he did is not mentioned, but it is very probable that he hunted up his brother James• It was natural for Andrew to seek first his brother Simon; it was natural for him to be more interested in his brother than in anyone else. "He brought him unto Jesus." This of course, was in a literal, physical sense—brought Simon into the presence of Jesus. To bring people to Jesus in faith, penitence, and obedience is a duty laid upon Christians, a duty which they should be glad to discharge to the best of their ability. Every Christian should in a reasonable length of time be able to teach others the way of life; God expects that of us. (Heb. 5:12.) You may not be able to lead another to Christ, but you must try to do so; and if you back up your effort by the right kind of life, you will succeed in causing some one to become a Christian. "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.) Jesus said to Simon, "Thou shalt be called Cephas." John adds by way of explanation to Greek readers, "Which is by interpretation, Peter"—Greek, Petros, which means a rock or stone, Simon the stone. Peter, or Petros, is therefore a descriptive title; later he was called Peter more often than Simon. His life shows that he lived up to his name—sometimes moved like a stone, and yet firm in his faith in Christ, even unto death.

Four Fishermen Called from Their Nets (Mark 1:16-20)

Many things occurred between the incidents mentioned in John 1:29-42 and those mentioned in Mark 1:16-20. From a brief mention of the temptations of Jesus Mark immediately proceeded to Christ's Galilean ministry. John gives many incidents of these early days that the others pass over. When Jesus left the scenes of the first part of this lesson, he had at least five disciples in his company.

From there he went to Galilee and attended a marriage feast at Cana of Galilee. Soon he went up to Jerusalem to attend the Passover

Feast. While there he had that celebrated conversation with Nicodemus. Other incidents are recorded in the third and fourth chapters of John, things that occurred before Jesus really began his Galilean ministry. Jesus was not engaged in a mere aimless walk along the shores of the Sea of Galilee when he came upon Peter, Andrew, James, and John. They were fishermen; but they were not on an "outing," fishing for sport; fishing was their business. The four, with Zebedee, the father of James and John, were partners. (Luke 5:10.) These men were not paupers, not shiftless ne'er-do-wells. It required considerable outlay of money to equip themselves with nets and boats of sufficient size to weather the violent storms which so frequently swooped down on that sea. Jesus said to the four, "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." The phrase, "fishers of men," refers to their future work of preaching the gospel and bringing men to Christ. Once when Peter was amazed at the abundance of fish caught in the net, Jesus said, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." (Luke 5:10.) "And straightway they left the nets, and followed him." Does their prompt obedience seem strange to you? Did they so promptly follow one of whom they knew nothing? No; Jesus would not want that sort of followers. Think of the first part of our lesson, and then notice what is said in the second, third, and fourth chapters of John; you will see that they had been with Jesus over a period of months before this. They were now engaged for a time at their old business; it is likely that they needed some expense money. Now Jesus calls them from their nets to be constantly with him in his travels. What became of their property? He who, when the thousands were fed, would have the scraps gathered up that nothing be lost, would certainly not have these men abandon their valuable property to ruin. They left their nets and boats with Zebedee and the hired servants. Their having hired servants showed that they were carrying on a considerable business, doubtless a profitable business. With them fishing was a business, not a recreation. It was a business in which there was much exposure to hardships, and required stamina and perseverance. Perhaps some of the profits made by Zebedee and the hired servants went to the support of Jesus and his company.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Jesus honored labor when he worked at the carpenter's trade, also when he chose these fishermen. Men who can work, but will not work, are parasites—just so much vermin on the human family. Men like that may preach, but they do so without an invitation from Jesus.

You need not be surprised that Jesus selected so many fishermen as apostles. To be successful in the fishing business, as were these men, requires physical strength, energy, and perseverance. They knew hardships, and how to meet disappointments—how to toil all night and catch nothing, and try again. In fishing for men they would need these qualities. Men who say, "If I fish a few minutes and catch nothing, I am ready to quit, would not make fishers of men. Jesus would not want that sort for apostles.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The duty of the Christian toward those without.
 How to bring men to Christ.
 The kind of preachers needed.
 Ecclesiastical parasites.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
 Tell about the baptism of Jesus.
 Tell about the committee sent from Jerusalem to question John.
 What did John say of himself?

Verses 29, 30

What is the "sin of the world"?
 Why is the world so sunk in sin and suffering?

Verses 31-34

In what sense did John not know Jesus?
 What sign had God given John that he might know when he baptized the Messiah?
 When did John see that sign?
 What shows that John was not ambitious for fame?

Verses 35-37

What announcement did John make concerning Jesus, and with what effect?

Verses 38, 39

Discuss verses 38, 39.

Verses 46-42

Which disciple is mentioned as getting busy, and with what results?
 How may we now bring people to Jesus?
 What is the meaning of the name Jesus gave Simon?

Mark 1:16-20

What evidence that the disciples had been much with Jesus when he called them from their nets and boats?
 What became of their property?
 What shows that these men were not paupers?
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson II—April 11, 1943

PETER AND JOHN WITNESS CHRIST'S GLORY

Mark 9:2-8; 2 Pet. 1:16-18

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

17 For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there was borne such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased:

18 And this voice we ourselves heard borne out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount.

GOLDEN TEXT—"There came a voice out of the cloud, This is my beloved Son: hear ye him." (Mark 9:7.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—2 Cor. 3:12-18.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

April 5.	M	The Transfiguration (Mark 9:2-8)
April 6.	T	The Voice from Heaven (2 Pet. 1:16-18)
April 7.	W	Paul's Heavenly Vision (2 Cor. 12:1-5)
April 6.	T	John's Vision on Patmos (Rev. 1:9-18)
April 9.	F	Longing for the Courts of the Lord (Psalm 84:1-7)
April 10.	S	The Glory of the Church (Hag. 2:6-9)
April 11.	S	The King of Glory (Psalm 24:7-10)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 30.

Place.—A high mountain, most likely Mount Hermon.

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

Lesson Links.—A great Bible student once said he did not believe there was a single passage of scripture that was written for the purpose of teaching anything about the condition of man between death and the resurrection. That is perhaps true; but even so, there are many passages that give light on the subject. For that matter, there is no passage written expressly for the purpose of proving the existence of God. Throughout the Bible the existence of God is spoken of as a settled truth, a truth that needed no proof. No man ever tries to prove that the sun shines on a clear day! When inspired writers speak of a thing as true, then it can be accepted as true beyond a doubt. If it can be said that no passage of scripture was written for the purpose of teaching that a man has a spirit that survives the death of the body, it can be said with as much truth that no passage was written to prove that man has a body in which the spirit dwells. Paul made no argument to prove that we have a body and a spirit; yet he assumes that we have both, and speaks of them as follows: "Though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day." (2 Cor. 4:16.) He speaks of our body as the tabernacle in which we dwell. (2 Cor. 5:1-9.) He speaks of both the outer man and the inward man as if their existence was a matter of common knowledge. The existence of the inward man separate and apart from the body was known in Job's day; at least, Job knew it. "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.) The Jewish translation gives verse 26 as follows: "And after my skin is cut to pieces will this be: and then freed from my body shall I behold God." "Without my flesh"—"freed from my body"—"shall I see God." Could anything be plainer? There are many other passages to the same import, too many to note here; but we shall find in our lesson another proof that people do exist between death and the resurrection.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON**Jesus Transfigured (Verses 2, 3)**

"And after six days." That was six days after the events mentioned in the latter part of the preceding chapter, and the first verse of the ninth chapter. To get the fullest possible view of these matters, including the transfiguration, the student should read carefully the

parallel passages in Matthew and Luke. Matthew's and Luke's accounts of the transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-9; Luke 9:28-36) will be taken into consideration in the study of this section of our lesson. "Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John." These are the three whom he took with him into the room when he raised from the dead the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:35-43), and whom he later took with him in the Garden of Gethsemane when he went aside from the others to pray (Matt. 26:35-43). We are not told why he selected these three to be with him on these important occasions; but we can rest assured that there was a sufficient reason, for Jesus did not act through favoritism. "And bringeth them up into a high mountain." The ancient tradition that this was Mount Tabor has been abandoned. They were in the regions of Caesarea Philippi, near Mount Hermon, which is a high mountain, six days before the transfiguration; Mount Tabor is some distance southwest of the Sea of Galilee, and it is not a high mountain. Jesus took these three "apart by themselves." He took them to a place where they could spend a season in prayer, undisturbed by any chance passer-by. On some bench, or tableland, of Mount Hermon they would find a suitable place where they could pray without being disturbed. Not the least expectation did Peter, James, and John have as to the experience that would be theirs that night as they trudged up that mountain. The transfiguration must have occurred in the night; the circumstances indicate that it was night. Besides, Luke speaks of their coming down the next day. (Luke 9:37.) For some reason, not revealed to us, Jesus desired to spend a season in prayer, with none present but Peter, James, and John; he also wanted these three to be present at his transfiguration. There was a purpose in what he did. Being human as well as divine, some of the recent occurrences, together with the things that were soon to come upon him, would be exceedingly depressing to his soul. Peter's confession, made but a few days before, and shared by the other disciples, had been encouraging; but Peter's rebuking him for saying that he must go to Jerusalem and be killed had been disappointing. His rebuke of Peter had been severe. (Mark 8:27-33.) The rebuke may have had an unfavorable effect on Peter; also on James and John, for they were of a fiery temper. But a short time before the events of this lesson Jesus had brought his disciples up into the regions of Caesarea Philippi to get away from the increasing turmoil and strife stirred up by the antagonism of the scribes and Pharisees in Galilee, so that he might, without disturbance, so thoroughly teach them that they would understandingly enter fully into his plans and purposes; but when he had told them of his approaching death—the main purpose of his coming into the world—they had rebelled at the thought. That was disappointing and depressing. And in addition to this, the shadow of the cross, now growing darker each day, would add to the gloom and depression of the hour. Along these lines he must have prayed; for the answer to his prayer was such as to encourage him beyond words to express, and served also to have a sobering effect on these fiery leaders of the apostles. "And he was transfigured before them." There had never been anything like this, and so there was no word in use that exactly described what took place. Neither the Greek word here translated "transfigured" nor the English word "transfigured" fully expresses the change that took place in the appearance of Jesus. It was necessary

for the writers to use other words to describe the change that took place. Luke says, "The fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became white and dazzling." (Luke 9:29.) "And his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light." (Matt. 17:2.) And Mark says, "And his garments became glistening, exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them." When Moses came down from the mountain at the giving of the law, his face shined "so that the children of Israel could not look stedfastly upon the face of Moses for the glory of his face"; but only his face was radiant. (Ex. 34:29-35; 2 Cor. 3:7.) How much more glorious did Christ appear! How awe-inspiring must have been the sight to these three witnesses as they beheld his glorified appearance!

Moses and Elijah Appear (Verse 4)

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

Peter's Proposal (Verses 5, 6)

Peter, always ready to speak out, said, "It is good for us to be here." It was good for Jesus and the three disciples; they would be greatly strengthened for future service and trims. Peter would have liked to stay with such a glorious experience; so he proposed to Jesus, "Let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." Who can blame Peter for wanting to prolong that delightful experience? Have you not been in company so delightful that you hated to leave it? Such tabernacles as Peter proposed were made of boughs of trees. Peter would build three tabernacles, thus paying equal honors to the Lord, Moses, and Elijah. This shows that he did not yet fully realize that Jesus was God manifest in the flesh, and that he was soon to be King of kings and Lord of lords. To honor him equally with Moses and Elijah was to dishonor him, but Peter meant it not so. In his confusion, he knew not what to say, and so should have said nothing. But tabernacles were not needed, for Moses and Elijah were about to disappear, and Jesus would soon go down from the mountain with the three apostles. With such an experience he could now return to the actualities of life, to the work of ministering to the needs of suffering humanity, and to the work of teaching them the way of life.

"Hear Ye Him" (Verses 7, 8)

"And there came a cloud overshadowing them." From Matthew we learn that this cloud appeared while Peter was talking, and that

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

Peter Reaffirms the Mountain Experience (2 Pet. 1:16-18)

The gospel had been preached to these people to whom Peter wrote, and they had become obedient to it. Peter here writes to reassure them of the soundness of the grounds of their faith. Their faith did not rest upon cunningly devised fables. The gospel did not arise in the fertile brain of fable makers, nor was it formulated by the inventors of ancient mythologies. When these apostles made known to these people the power and coming (Greek, presence) of the Lord Jesus Christ, they were presenting facts of which they were eyewitnesses. They saw his majesty with their own eyes. The vision on the mount was real; they had seen and heard. On the holy mount they heard the Majestic Glory say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Peter makes this emphatic affirmation: "And this voice we ourselves heard borne out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount." No theories should dispute Peter's plain affirmation.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Materialists claim that a man does not have a spirit that survives the death of his body, and that there is therefore no personal existence between death and the resurrection. Now, the Bible clearly states that Moses died and was buried, and also that he appeared on the mount and talked with Jesus. To offset the force of this, materialists put great stress on the word "vision" in Matthew's report. It is true that the word from which we have "vision" some-

times means "a sight divinely granted in an ecstasy or in sleep," but its first meaning is "that which is seen, a sight, a spectacle." That the word "vision" in Matthew 17:9 applies to things actually seen seems, from the following considerations, not to admit of a doubt: (1) Matthew, Mark, and Luke say plainly that Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James, and John. (2) They say that Moses and Elijah were present, and talked with Jesus about his coming death. Materialists deny the reality of these things, and would have us believe that Jesus carried on a conversation with men not present, as if he were mentally unbalanced. (3) The apostles were not asleep—they were not dreaming. Luke says, "When they were fully awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him." To doubt this is to doubt the word of God. (4) While Matthew reports Jesus as saying, "Tell the vision to no man," Mark says, "He charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen." The vision was then not a dream, but what they had seen. (5) Peter, in the section of our lesson just studied, speaks very definitely of the reality of what they had seen and heard in that mountain experience.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Moses.
Elijah.
The transfiguration.
The authority of Christ.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text. Jesus?

Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
Give proof that man has a spirit that survives the death of the body.

Verses 2, 3

Give some incidents immediately preceding the transfiguration.
On what occasions did Jesus take with him Peter, James, and John?
Where did the transfiguration occur?
Give the expressions used to describe the change that took place.
What purpose would the transfiguration serve?

Verse 4

Discuss the appearance of Moses and Elijah.
What was the topic of their conversation with

Verses 5, 6

What did Peter propose?
Why did Peter make that proposal?
Why were such tabernacles not needed?

Verses 7, 8

What is said of a cloud?
What made the disappearing of Moses and Elijah so impressive?
What did a voice from the cloud say?
What prophecy had Moses made concerning Christ?
Give passages showing the authority of Christ.

2 Pet. 1:16-18

Discuss verse 16.
How does Peter's language show that the mountain experience was real?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson III—April 18, 1943

PETER AND JOHN IN GETHSEMANE

Matt. 26:36-46; John 18:10-12

36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray.

37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and sore troubled.

38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: abide ye here, and watch with me.

39 And he went forward a little, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.

40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

42 Again a second time he went away, and prayed, saying, My Father, if this cannot pass away, except I drink it, thy will be done.

43 And he came again and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy.

44 And he left them again, and went away, and prayed a third time, saying again the same words.

45 Then cometh he to the disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

46 Arise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that betrayeth me.

10 Simon Peter therefore having a sword drew it, and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. Now the servant's name was Malchus.

11 Jesus therefore said unto Peter, Put up the sword into the sheath: the cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

12 So the band and the chief captain, and the officers of the Jews, seized Jesus and bound him.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." (Matt. 26:41.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Heb. 2:17, 18; 4:14-16.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

April 12.	M	Failure in Crises (Matt. 26:36-46)
April 13.	T	Helping or Hindering Christ (John 18:4-11)
April 14.	W	Praying Against Failure (Luke 22:31-38)
April 15.	T	Trifling with Temptation (1 Cor. 10:1-13)
April 16.	F	Asleep on Duty (Matt. 25:1-13)
April 17.	S	Christians, Awake! (Eph. 5:5-15)
April 18.	S	Watchmen (Isa. 62:6-12)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 31. It was the night in which Jesus was seized and led away to his trials.

Place.—The Garden of Gethsemane.—This garden was on the slopes of Mount Olivet, and was then likely much larger than the small enclosure now called Gethsemane.

Persons.—Jesus, his disciples, Judas, and the mob that seized Jesus and led him away.

Lesson Links.—Many things occurred during the week of the crucifixion. Many things were said and done on the night of the betrayal, as the student will see by reading Matt. 26:20-75; Mark 14:17-72; Luke 22:14-65; John 13; 18:27. It seems that the prayer recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John was uttered after the institution of the Lord's Supper, and just before they went out of the city to the Garden of Gethsemane.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Garden of Gethsemane (Verse 36)

"Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane." Gethsemane means a place of oil presses. At this time it was a garden, but retained its name. Immediately after giving the prayer of Jesus, John added, "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.) "Jesus oft-times resorted thither with his disciples." (John 18:2.) "And he came out, and went, as his custom was, unto the mount of Olives." (Luke 22:39.) It had been a pleasant place to rest and converse with his disciples. It appeared to have been open to the public, a sort of pleasure garden, or park; but had it never been more than that, we never would have heard of it. One night of sorrow, prayer, and resignation gave it an imperishable name. "Gethsemane has not come down to us as a scene of mirth; its inexhaustible associations are the offspring of a single event the agony of the Son of God on the evening preceding his passion."-Smith. Every time the name Gethsemane comes to the mind of the Christian there springs up in his heart a sad, sweet feeling that nothing else produces. When we think of it, we do not even try to picture it in our mind; we think only of what happened there. Having entered the garden, Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray." The tragedy of the cross was drawing near. Soon he would be in the hands of his enemies, cruel and unreasoning, and his beloved disciples would be scattered. The people he came to save would soon be a raging mob, clamoring for his death, and the hopes of his disciples would be crushed. In an hour like that comfort and solace could be found only in communion with his Father. And who has not had experiences in which prayer was the only refuge for the burdened heart? "Blessed hour of prayer."

The Chosen Three (Verses 37, 38)

Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and went farther into the garden, leaving the others near the entrance. "And began to be sorrowful and sore troubled." We cannot fathom the mystery of the union of humanity and deity in the person of Jesus; he hungered, thirsted, became weary, and rested in sleep, as do human beings. The horrors of the cross would therefore be dreaded by him, as it would by any human being. It is not therefore surprising that Jesus became sore troubled. He knew, as none other could know, what was before him. He knew that soon he would pass through a mock trial before the high court of his own people, and then be delivered into the hands of the Romans who would scourge him and mock him, and then crucify him amid the taunts and jeers of his own people; yet he had done good, and no evil. "He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." (Isa. 53:3.) The world was full of hate the Jews hated the Romans, and the Romans hated the Jews, and both hated Jesus, and would later be as one in their hatred of his church. All this brought great sorrow. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." He felt as if he could not survive the pressure that was upon his soul. His feeling of lonely helplessness is seen in his request to the three he had near him: "Abide ye here, and watch with me." "He who had been there comforter in every hour of trouble and danger, now calls on them for the help which their wakeful sympathy would give him in the hour of his agony. Wonderful sight! The Son of God longing for the sympathy of human hearts, and leaning in a time of weakness on the arm of human friendship, and leaning, too, as so many sufferers have done, on a broken reed."—McGarvey. Another has said, "Everyone knows how terrible is suffering in loneliness. The solitary watch in the night hours often becomes a terror to the

strong and well. To those in pain it is like an eternity of agony. We can face hard trial and suffering if only we can feel the touch of a loving hand, and know that another shares the trial. This comfort was denied the suffering Savior.

In Great Agony Jesus Prays (Verses 39-46)

Jesus went forward a little way from the place where he had stationed his three chosen companions, "and fell on his face, and prayed." Standing in prayer is expressive of respect, kneeling is expressive of humility, falling prostrate on the ground with the face downward is expressive of utter helplessness and entire submission. According to Luke, Jesus first kneeled; as the agony of the hour increased, he fell prostrate upon the ground. Anyone who has prayed in great agony of soul has realized in his own experience the condition of spirit that prompted Jesus to fall on his face in that awful hour. "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me." It was certainly physically possible for God to save Jesus from death on the cross, for no earthly power is greater than God—no earthly power can overcome God. It is evident therefore that Jesus did not have that in mind. Jesus must have prayed for the cup of suffering to pass away, if it were possible to save men any other way. Not in this life will we understand fully why the death of Christ was necessary to man's salvation; but we can believe in him—believe that he died for us, and that only through the merits of his blood can man be saved. Concerning the "cup," McGarvey says, "It was common in ancient times to execute criminals by compelling them to drink a cup of poison, and assassination and suicide were often effected by the same means. The cup therefore became a symbol of suffering and of death, and is so used here." But does that express the whole truth about the figurative use of the word "cup"? Consider the following: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou hast anointed my head with oil; my cup runneth over." (Psalm 23:5.) "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of Jehovah." (Psalm 116:13.) "Neither shall men give them the cup of consolation to drink." (Jer. 16:7.) Hence we have the cup of joy, the cup of salvation, the cup of consolation, the cup of suffering. "Cup" therefore may be good fortune or suffering. "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Jesus prayed in all earnestness, yet he was resigned to his Father's will. To pray earnestly, with the whole heart set on obtaining that for which we pray, is proper and right. Jesus did that, and taught us to do likewise. On one occasion Jesus "spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint"—not to become discouraged and quit. A certain widow came oft to the judge with the same plea. In her case there was earnestness of pleading and patient waiting. She would not give up. Jesus spoke that parable to encourage us to be persistent in petition, and to be patient in waiting. (Luke 18:1-8.) And here in Gethsemane Jesus practiced what he had taught his disciples in that parable; he prayed three times, making the same petition in every prayer, with but a few moments intervening between the prayers. And yet he was resigned to his Father's will in the matter; so should we be. And yet it is hard for people to be desperately in earnest in their prayers, and at the same time to be wholly resigned to the

Father's will. In praying no effort should be made to dictate to God as to what should be done in any matter; for when we dictate, we do not pray. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said, "And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do." (Matt. 6:7.) Some have thought that Jesus here prohibits a repetition of the same petition; yet he prayed three times in rapid succession, saying the same words. Surely he was not violating his own teaching. Vain repetitions are empty repetitions. If a petition is vain when repeated, it was vain when first made. No one who is desperately in earnest will be content with praying once—he will pray again and again, as Jesus did. There is nothing vain about repeating such prayers. Jesus left the three apostles to watch while he prayed. They had come on a long journey from Galilee to Jerusalem; and, in the excitement of the week, they had found little chance to rest and relax, lit must have now been past midnight. They were weary; the quietness of the garden was soothing. So when Jesus returned from his first prayer, he found them sleeping. They had violated a trust. He said to Peter, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." "Ye" is plural; he included the three in that rebuke and admonition. The assurance they expressed on the way to the garden was still with them. (Verses 31-35.) So they neither watched nor prayed. Had they known what was to come upon them within the hour, they could not have slept. They fell asleep each time Jesus left them. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak. In this statement Jesus must have also expressed his own feelings. His human nature drew back from the tortures of the cross. It so often happens in human beings that the spirit is not willing—the flesh has full control. It seems that, after the third prayer, Jesus had gained full control of himself, and had become fully resigned to the mock trials, the abuses, and the tragedy of the cross, all of which he knew awaited him. When he returned from this last prayer, he found the three asleep again. His battle was over; so he said to them, "Sleep on now, and take your rest." After saying this, Jesus must have waited some time before he said, "Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that betrayeth me." It does not seem reasonable that he would tell them to sleep on and take their rest, and immediately tell them to arise. Perhaps they had some time for rest before the mob came to seize Jesus.

Simon Peter Begins to Fight (John 18:10-12)

It seems that Judas came in front of the band that came to seize Jesus. It is likely that he did not want Jesus and the disciples to know that he was leading the mob, so little did he know the powers of Jesus. To keep Jesus and the disciples in the dark as to his leadership of the mob, he would not openly announce to them which was Jesus. He had appointed the mob a sign—he would kiss Jesus, so they would know whom to take. And so, as if he were still a devoted disciple and friend of Jesus, he kissed Jesus; but Jesus said, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" (Luke 22:48.) "And when they that were about him saw what would follow, they said, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" (Luke 22:49.) With Peter, to think of doing a thing was to act. Immediately he drew his sword, and cut off the ear of Malchus, servant to the high priest.

But Jesus stopped further hostilities by ordering Peter to put up his sword. He had become resigned to drinking the cup which the Father had given him. Then the mob seized Jesus, bound him, and led him away first to Annas.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Throughout the world Judas has been denounced for his betrayal of his Lord. But is he the only pretended friend of the Lord who ever betrayed him? But what about the man Judas? Did he not sell himself to do evil? What about the merchant or professional man who refuses to stand up for the Lord for fear he will lose some gain? And what about the preacher? Does he not betray the Lord and sell himself to do evil when he avoids preaching some unpleasant truth so as to enhance his popularity and thus to increase his gain? Such men betray the Lord, as Judas did.

Peter had said to the Lord, "Even if I must die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." (Matt. 26:35.) There is every reason to believe that Peter would have made good on that affirmation, had he been allowed to fight in Gethsemane; but when he was told to put up his sword, he felt weak and defenseless. If we could see the situation as it appeared to Peter, we would not be so severe on Peter for denying the Lord. When he saw his Lord meekly submit to his enemies, and heard him say, "Put up the sword," he must have felt that all was lost, and that there was no further need for him to risk his life. Besides, he did even better than the others; for they all, excepting John, fled at the first sign of trouble.

The scene in the garden centers around Jesus, "who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear, though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation." (Heb. 5:7-9.)

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Judas—a character study.
How we may now betray the Lord.
Learning obedience.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
Name some things that occurred during the week of the crucifixion.

Verse 36

Give facts about the Garden of Gethsemane.
What gave it an imperishable name?

Verses 37, 38

Can you remember on what other occasions Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him?
How is Christ's state of mind described?
Why was he sorrowful and sore troubled?
What did he say to the three?

Verses 39-46

What position of body did Jesus adopt for this prayer?
Discuss the position of the body in prayer.
Give the wording of Christ's prayer.
Discuss the significance of "cup" in its figurative use.
How did Jesus express his submission to the Father's will?
Discuss repetition of prayers.
What is vain repetition?
How did the three fail Jesus?
What rebuke did Jesus deliver?
What did Jesus finally say to the three?

John 18:10-12

Discuss these verses.
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IV—April 25, 1943

THE RISEN LORD

John 20:1-17

1 Now on the first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, while it was yet dark, unto the tomb, and seeth the stone taken away from the tomb.

2 She runneth therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him.

3 Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb.

4 And they ran both together: and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the tomb;

5 And stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths lying; yet entered he not in.

6 Simon Peter therefore also cometh, following him, and entered into the tomb; and he beholdeth the linen cloths lying,

7 And the napkin, that was upon his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself.

8 Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, who came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed.

9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

10 So the disciples went away again unto their own home.

11 But Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping: so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb;

12 And she beholdeth two angels in white sitting, one at the Head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

14 When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and beholdeth Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turneth herself, and saith unto him in Hebrew, Rabboni; which is to say, Teacher.

17 Jesus saith to her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father: but go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God.

GOLDEN TEXT—"He is risen." (Mark 16:6.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Cor. 15:50-58.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

April 19. M

April 20. T

April 21. W

April 22. T

April 23. F

April 24. S

April 25. S

The Empty Tomb (John 20:1-10)

Jesus Appears to Mary (John 20:11-18)

Peter's Testimony (Acts 2:22-28)

If Christ Be Not Risen! (1 Cor. 15:12-19)

Attaining the Resurrection (Phil. 3:7-14)

The Resurrection Life (Rom. 6:1-11)

The Ever-Present Companion (Psalm 16:1-11)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 31—the day of the resurrection of Christ, the first day of the week.

Place.—Jerusalem.

Persons.—Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Simon Peter, John.

Lesson Links.—When the mob seized Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane and led him away, all the disciples fled, excepting Peter and John, who followed along to see what would be done to their beloved Lord and master. Jesus went from the garden fully resigned to the fate that he knew awaited him. He knew the fury of

his enemies; he knew that the Sanhedrin, the high court of the Jews, would be no more than a frenzied mob, clamoring for his blood; he knew also the sorrow and despair that would engulf his disciples; but amid it all there was the cheering prospect of a glorious resurrection and ascension and the redemption of countless thousands, which his sufferings would make possible, "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12:2.) As a result of his perfect submission to his Father's will, Jesus was the calmest and most serene person present in all his mock trials. "Consider him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against himself, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls." (Heb. 12:3.) The authorities in Jerusalem were now about to put into execution a long-standing determination. Frequently nations, through constituted authorities, execute criminals; but here was a nation determined to put to death one who had committed no crime, one who did no sin. (1 Pet. 2:22, 23.) The trials through which they rushed Jesus were mere formalities—his death had already been determined. Jesus was not killed by an individual, but by a nation through its highest authority—he was murdered by a nation. They even mocked him and jeered at him while he was suffering the agonies of their cruelties. They gloated over what they thought was a great triumph, but not for long. Jesus arose. Jesus "was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification." By his resurrection he was declared to be the Son of God with power. (Rom. 1:4.) His resurrection was the crowning proof that he was all that he claimed to be. If Christ had not been raised, then what? "And if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ have perished." (1 Cor. 15:17, 18.) The power of the cross is made sure by the power of his resurrection.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Mary Magdalene at the Tomb (Verses 1, 2)

It would have taken a book of immense size to contain a full account of all that was said and done in connection with the trials, crucifixion, and resurrection of our Lord. The accounts are therefore of necessity fragmentary. This makes it difficult in some instances to place details in their proper order. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had no part in condemning Jesus to death. Joseph secured permission from Pilate to take the body of Jesus down from the cross and bury it. Nicodemus helped in this burial. (John 19:38-42.) From verse 42 it seems that this burial was meant to be only temporary. "And the women, who had come with him out of Galilee, followed after, and beheld the tomb, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. And on the sabbath, they rested according to the commandment." (Luke 23:55, 56.) They did not have time to finish this labor of love before the Sabbath began. Incidentally, this should throw light on the controversy about which was the day of the crucifixion; it was Friday, not Thursday. "But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came unto the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared." (Luke 24:1.) Of these women John mentions only Mary Magdalene as coming to the tomb. She was evidently the

most active of the group. These women had not learned that Pilate had given order to the Jewish authorities to set a governor's seal on the tomb, and to place a guard at the tomb. But that seal and that guard were of no avail, for the women found that the stone had been rolled from the entrance to the tomb, and that the body of Jesus was gone. Mary Magdalene went in haste to report the matter to Peter and John; and in that report she included the other women that went early to the tomb, for she said, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him." It seems that she thought some of the friends had removed the body to its permanent resting place, but she knew not where that was to be. The women, of course, were anxious to place on the body of Jesus the spices and ointment which they had prepared.

Peter and John Hasten to the Tomb (Verses 3-10)

Peter and John lost no time; they ran to the tomb, but John outran Peter. Commentators think that age made the difference in their speed, but it is not likely that Peter was then old enough to slow down his speed. Some are naturally faster than others. When John reached the tomb, he looked in, and saw the linen cloths lying, but did not enter. It is useless to speculate on the reasons for his not entering the tomb. We know from other recorded instances that Peter was usually bold and daring and prompt to act. Hence, so soon as he arrived, he entered the tomb. Though John speaks of himself as outrunning Peter, he grants to Peter the honor of being the first to enter the tomb. Conditions inside the tomb did not indicate that thieves had hastily snatched the body away; the cloths were not scattered about in disorder. Evidently Peter had doubted what Mary Magdalene had said as to the absence of the body of Jesus. At least John had not believed her story, for he says, "Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, who came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed." Some think this means that John believed in Christ, believed that he had been raised from the dead; but the next two verses show the contrary. He now believed, and of course so did Peter, that Mary Magdalene had told a correct story. It does not seem that any of the disciples expected Jesus to rise the third day, yet he had repeatedly told them he would rise again the third day. While they were in the regions of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus began to tell them plainly "that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up." (Matt. 16:21.) Even during his last journey to Jerusalem, "he took the twelve disciples apart, and on the way he said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him unto the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify: and the third day he shall be raised up." Even the chief priests knew that he had so taught, for they said to Pilate, "Sir, we remember that that deceiver said while he was yet alive, After three days I rise again. Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day, lest haply his disciples come and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: and the last error will be worse than the first." But it seems that the disciples had their minds so fully set on other things, that they failed to grasp what Jesus had said. These disciples did not know the

prophecies concerning his resurrection. This does not mean that they did not know the scriptures at all, but that they did not know that any passages foretold the resurrection of the Christ. On that same day Jesus said to the two disciples as they journeyed to Emmaus, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:25, 26.) Peter and John, having satisfied themselves that the body of Jesus had been taken away, returned to their places of abode. Sometime during that day Jesus appeared to Peter.

Mary Magdalene and the Two Angels (Verses 11-13)

Mary Magdalene had run to tell Peter and John that the body of Jesus had been taken away, but it is not likely that she ran with them back to the tomb. However she did return. "But Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping." Mary Magdalene was full of gratitude to Jesus for what he had done for her—"from whom he had cast out seven demons." (Mark 16:9.) This does not mean, as some think, that she was a bad woman before the demons were cast out. We know little about demons, and how they came to enter into certain people; but we know that he cast a demon out of one who is referred to as a child, a little daughter. (Mark 7:25-30.) This could not have been on account of any immorality on the part of this little girl. Nothing is said against the character of Mary Magdalene, but all that is said of her shows her to have been a woman of high ideals and of great devotion to the Lord. She would have another look into the tomb; "so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb." It seems that she this time wanted merely to see the place where the body of Jesus had lain; but she saw that for which she had not looked, namely, "two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain." If she recognized these as heavenly visitors, it is singular that she remained so calm and unperturbed. They said to her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" as much as to say, "There is no need now to weep; he is risen from the dead; he is now alive for evermore." But she had not yet grasped the fact that Jesus had arisen from the dead; so she said, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." From the other records, it would seem that the angels then told her that Jesus had risen, but we cannot be sure of the order in which all the events occurred.

Jesus Appeared First to Mary Magdalene (Verses 14-17)

"Now when he was risen early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene." (Mark 16:9.) John describes the manner of that appearance; or, rather, tells of the incidents connected with that appearance. When Mary finished speaking to the angels, "she turned herself back," she turned to return to her place of abode. Then she saw Jesus, but did not recognize him. That fact has been the basis of a lot of guessing; but a common sense explanation seems to be this: She was weeping in great grief, and was not interested in seeing anyone, and did no more than to notice that some one was standing near. Besides, her tears blurred her vision; and verse 16 shows that she was not looking, at the man. It is not at all surprising that she did not take enough notice to see who he

really was—just supposed him to be the gardener. She still could not realize that Jesus had been raised from the dead, but thought the gardener might have had something to do with removing the body from the tomb. She had not been facing the supposed gardener while she was talking. But now in a voice she readily recognized, Jesus spoke the one word, "Mary." Then she turned, and said, "Rabboni." Then Jesus said a thing that has given rise to much talk by preachers and commentators: "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father." The marginal reading has "Take not hold on me." It seems that she was about to take hold of his feet and worship him, as was done within the hour. (Matt. 28:9.) Jesus was not going to ascend immediately; there would be yet time for her to express her devotions; there was at the moment something more urgent—she must go and tell the other disciples. Notice how in that announcement he expresses his unity with the disciples in his relation to the Father: "But go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God." Here he makes himself one with the disciples.

SOME REFLECTIONS

All other proofs that Jesus was, and is, the Christ, the Son of God, really depend for their validity on his resurrection. If he did not arise, everything else concerning him and his plan is vain. But there is abundant and certain proof of his resurrection. Even his enemies contributed their part in putting the proof of his resurrection beyond doubt. His enemies pronounced him dead. (Mark 15:42-45.) No enemy therefore could say that the disciples removed him from the cross before he died, and pretended to bury him. Then the chief priests and Pharisees, his bitterest enemies, contributed their part in making the proof of his resurrection certain and sure. They remembered that Jesus had said that he would rise again the third day, and they feared that his disciples would steal the body away to make it appear that he did arise. They made known to Pilate their fears, and secured from him permission to set the governor's seal on the tomb, and to place a guard at the tomb. The seal was so placed that no one could move the stone without breaking the seal; the soldiers would see that no one stole the body. The seal would keep the soldiers from accepting a bribe to let the disciples take the body away. And thus human ingenuity was exhausted in this effort to keep the body from being stolen away; by their efforts they made it impossible for the body to disappear except by divine intervention. But the body did disappear, though it could not have disappeared by human agency. Hence these wicked men, these enemies of Christ, did a real service to Christianity. Was there not a little irony in what Pilate said to these men: "Ye have a guard: go, make it as sure as ye can"? Is there not an implication that they might fail to make it sure? No, Pilate did not say, Make it sure. It is a pity that preachers sometimes take these words of that reprobate, these words implying the possibility of failure, as a text from which to preach a sermon. Peter's language is from a better source, and sounds much better: "Make your calling and election sure." (2 Pet. 1:10.)

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

How God uses wicked men to accomplish his purposes.
 A discussion of Matt. 28:11-15.
 How the fruits of Christianity prove its divine origin.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
 Give some things that weighed heavily upon Jesus as he was led from Gethsemane by the mob.
 Discuss the difference between murder by an individual and by a nation.

Verses 1, 2

Who had buried Jesus?
 Tell about the women mentioned.
 Tell about Mary Magdalene.
 What did she think and say about the absence of the body of Jesus?
 To whom?

Verses 3-10

Tell about the visit of Peter and John at the tomb.
 How did they find things arranged in the tomb?
 What is said about their knowing the prophecies?

Verses 11-13

Why would Mary Magdalene be so grateful to Jesus?
 Tell about the angels, and what was said.

Verses 14-17

To whom did Jesus first appear?
 Why did she not readily recognize Jesus?
 What did Jesus say to her, and why?
 How did Jesus express his unity with his disciples?
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson V—May 2, 1943

CHRIST'S CHARGE TO PETER

John 21:15-24

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

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

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

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

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

20 Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; who also leaned back on his breast at the supper, and said, Lord, who is he that betrayeth thee?

21 Peter therefore seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?

22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.

23 This saying therefore went forth among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, that he should not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

24 This is the disciple that beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 John 3:13-18.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

April 26.	M	Love in Action (John 21:15-24)
April 27.	T	The Good Shepherd (Psalm 80:1-3)
April 28.	W	Jesus and the Children (Mark 10:13-16)
April 29.	T	"Give Ye Them to Eat" (Luke 9:12-17)
April 30.	F	The Child and the Kingdom (Matt. 18:1-6)
May 1.	S	Feeding the Church (Acts 20:28-35)
May 2.	S	God Our Provider (Psalm 81:10-16)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 31; probably the second week after the resurrection of Christ.

Place.—The Sea of Tiberias, called also the Sea of Galilee.

Persons.—Jesus; also "there were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples." (John 21:2.) The sons of Zebedee were James and John. The two disciples whose names are not given were likely not apostles.

Lesson Links.—It is not likely that every appearance of Jesus after he arose from the dead has been recorded, for his appearances covered a period of forty days. (Acts 1:1-3.) "Now when he was risen early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene." (Mark 16:9.) He then appeared to other women. (Matt. 28:5-9.) Then he appeared to Simon Peter. (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5.) Toward the close of the day he appeared to the two disciples who went out from Jerusalem to Emmaus. (Luke 24:13-31.) He then appeared to ten apostles in Jerusalem, Thomas being absent. (John 20:19-24.) All these appearances were on the day of his resurrection. Eight days later he appeared to the apostles, Thomas being present. (John 20:26-29.) It seems that the next recorded appearance is the one mentioned in connection with our present lesson. Before Jesus was crucified, he said to his disciples, "After I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee." (Matt. 26:32.) After he was raised up both he and an angel reminded them of this appointment. (Matt. 28:7-10.) Of course there was a time and a place appointed for this meeting, else no one would have known when nor where to go. It seems certain that the disciples remained in Jerusalem, or Bethany, for at least one week before they went down to Galilee. While they were waiting for the appointed meeting, "Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also come with thee." If speakers and writers had read the Bible enough to know that Peter had seen the Lord at least three times, they never would have said that, when Jesus was crucified, Peter gave up hope and went back to fishing. It is likely that they needed to replenish their funds. They toiled all night, and took nothing. "But when day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach: yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus." When they cast the net on the other side of the boat, as directed by the man on the shore, "they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes." John immediately said to Peter, "It is the Lord." They then lost no time in reaching the shore; there they found that Jesus had already prepared something to eat. The statement in the fourteenth verse, that this was the third time Jesus had appeared to the disciples after he arose from the dead, does not contradict the facts already stated concerning his appearances. This was the

third time that he had appeared to a group of his disciples; the other two times are mentioned in John 20:19-29.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

“Lovest Thou Me” (Verses 15-17)

"So when they had broken their fast," or, as we would say, When they had eaten breakfast, "Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these?" Three times Peter had denied his Lord, and three times now the Lord calls on him for an avowal of his love. It is not clear as to what is meant by "these." Some are confident that Jesus meant, Do ye love me more than these things, the fish and the fishing equipment? Do you love me more than you love your business? Many professed Christians do love their business more than they love the Lord. Others are equally confident that Jesus meant, Do you love me more than do these other disciples? That seems to be the more natural view; for Peter had affirmed that, even if all the others stumbled, he would not. He thought he was more devoted to the Lord than were the others; and yet he had denied his Lord three times. His experience had taught him that he was not so strong as he thought he was, and the Lord's questions hurt; yet he knew, in view of his denials, the questions were not unjust. His experiences had also taught him a new respect for the Lord's foreknowledge—taught him not to dispute what the Lord said would come to pass. So he said, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." But here is a curious fact: Peter answered the Lord, and yet did not exactly answer him; for Jesus used one word for love and Peter used another. Unfortunately we have only the one word for love, and that word cannot express the distinction these two words express. The Greek verb, *agapao*, which Jesus used, is expressive of reverence and respect, or of a sense of duty or obligation. It can be exercised at will; it is subject to command, and that command can be obeyed. It is found in such passages as Matt. 5:43; 19:19; John 3:18, and many other passages. It sometimes expresses such a desire to do others good as to lead one to action. One loves God when he willingly obeys his commands (John 14:15, 21); and he loves his neighbor, and even his enemy, when he wishes them well, treats them fairly, and helps them in their needs. But the word Peter used, *phileo*, is more personal, and grows out of kinship or association. It is therefore warmer and more intimate. We miss entirely the point of difference between the two words when we argue that the word Jesus used is stronger than the word Peter used. The interesting point in this discussion is the difference in the significance of the two words, and not in their relative strength. The love that Jesus inquired about in his first two questions is the love Peter had been taught to exercise toward God, toward his neighbor, and even toward his enemy. That word involved no personal feeling or affection growing out of pleasant association. No wonder the first two questions probed Peter to the quick; he felt that Jesus was holding him too much at arm's length, when he knew that Jesus knew how warm was his devotion to Jesus; and in each answer Peter used the word that expressed that warm devotion. Then Jesus adopted the same word Peter had used; as much as to say, "Now, Simon, do you really have that warm personal devotion to me that you express? Think of the past; remember what you

said when I was being mocked and abused before the high priest." The continued questioning grieved Peter; he did not want his Lord to doubt his affections; he was deeply hurt. Then he answered, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Peter did not think Jesus knew all things when Jesus said to him, "Verily I say unto thee, that thou to-day, even this night, before the cock crow twice, shalt deny me thrice." (Mark 14:30.) But events proved to Peter that the Lord did know. When Simon answered the first time, Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." At his second answer Jesus said, "Tend my sheep"—be a shepherd to my sheep. At his third answer Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." Of course what Peter was commanded to do was required of all the apostles. They were made general shepherds over all Christians through all time. As an apostle Paul felt this responsibility. (2 Cor. 11:28.) All Christians—all churches—are today as much under the apostles, and are as dependent on them for spiritual food and guidance, as were the churches in the days of their personal ministry. We must look to them.

The Manner of Peter's Death Foretold (Verses 18, 19)

In questioning Peter Jesus had showed trust in Peter by telling him to feed his lambs, to tend his sheep. Peter would not, in the face of danger, deny the Lord any more. When the time came, as it would come, he would die rather than forsake or deny his Lord; he would yet make good where he had formerly so ignominiously failed. While he was young, he could gird himself, and go where he pleased. Jesus taught him that it would be different when he grew old; then another would bind him, and lead him where he did not want to go. "Now this he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God." Tradition has it that Peter was crucified with his head downward, and that he had stated that he was not worthy to be crucified in the usual way, as was his Lord; but tradition is not very reliable. Be that as it may, Peter had the assurance from the Lord's own words that he would live to be an old man; for this crucifixion was to be his manner of death when he was old. He therefore could not teach, without denying his Lord's words, that Jesus might come again at any time. Peter knew, and all who heard what the Lord said knew, that the Lord would not come so long as Peter lived, and that Peter would live to be an old man. "And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me." There must have been a deeper meaning in these words than a mere invitation for Peter to follow him to one side away from the other disciples.

"Follow Thou Me" (Verses 20-23)

It is thought by some commentators that John here leaves out some things that were done and said. Not every detail could be told. Perhaps Peter, having followed Jesus apart from the other disciples, was already in conversation with Jesus when John was seen approaching. The most likely subject for this conversation, in view of what Jesus had just said to Peter, was the manner of Peter's coming martyrdom. "What shall this man do?" According to the marginal reading in the American Standard Version, the Greek means literally, "and this man, what?" Peter and John were often together; and

Peter, being older, had a tender, protective feeling for John. Since he himself was to suffer martyrdom, what was to be the fate of John? That, at least, would be a natural question for Peter to ask. It does not seem reasonable, as some think, that Peter resented John's coming to them, and asked Jesus what about it. The reply of Jesus has been a matter for much speculation. Various theories have been advanced, but no real light given. Some have thought, as did some of the disciples then, that Jesus meant that John would never die; others, that he would not die before Jesus came in judgment on Jerusalem and the Jews; others, that Jesus would come, and take him away by a "natural death"; others, that John would remain where he was till Jesus and Peter returned from their conversation. But these seem rather fanciful. Peter's question about John seemed to be that he wanted to know about the manner of death John would suffer; for Jesus had just told Peter about his manner of death. The reply Jesus made seems to have been meant as a gentle rebuke to Peter, as much as to say, "Why inquire into matters that do not concern you? If John should never die, if I should keep him alive till I come again, what of it?" Here is what should concern you: "Follow thou me." And that meant more than going about with Jesus on that day; Peter was to follow his teaching, his manner of living, and even in the manner of death he should die. It seems that John did not know, at the time he wrote his record, what Christ meant by what he said to Peter, but he did know that others had wrongly interpreted what Jesus said; he knew there was no promise in the words of Jesus that he would never die.

John's Testimony True (Verse 24)

Some have thought that John may not have written verse 24, that it is an appendix added by others who knew John's testimony to be true; but that is a matter that need not disturb us. John knew that his testimony was true; for others to know it to be true did not make it any more true. From verse 25 we learn that John had recorded only a small portion of the things Jesus said and did.

SOME REFLECTIONS

There are not many readers of the Bible; still fewer really study it. Some who read the Bible seem not to see anything excepting what they can use in an argument. If people had really read the twenty-first chapter of John, they would never have been guilty of saying, "When Jesus was crucified, Peter gave up hope, and said, 'I go a fishing.'"

A Christian must love the Lord more than he loves his business, and more than he loves his friends or his own people; and he really should seek to love the Lord more than do his associates, so that he may be an example to them. Paul labored—loved—more abundantly than others, and exhorted them to imitate him. It was not a matter of pride to him, but of sincere devotion to the Lord.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Proving our love for the Lord.

The difference between loving an enemy and one's own family and friends.

Following Christ.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

What did Jesus command Peter to do?

Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

Give the recorded appearances of Jesus the first day after he arose.

When did the next recorded appearance occur?

Tell about the meeting on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Verses 18, 19

How had Jesus showed that he trusted Peter?

What now did Jesus say to Peter?

Discuss the meaning of what Jesus said.

What did Jesus then say to Peter?

Verses 20-23

Who was following Jesus and Peter aside?

What did Peter say, and what was his meaning?

What did Jesus say?

What is the significance of what he said?

What did Jesus command Peter to do?

Verses 15-17

Discuss the questions Jesus asked Peter, together with Peter's reply.

What had experience taught Peter about the Lord's foreknowledge?

Discuss the difference between loving one's own people and loving others.

What is it to love God?

Verse 24

Discuss verse 24.

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VI—May 9, 1943

PETER AND JOHN LEADERS IN THE EARLY CHURCH

Acts 2:37-41; 3:1-8; 4:13, 18-21

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

21 And they, when they had further threatened them, let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people; for all men glorified God for that which was done.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." (Acts 4:13.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 33:12-22.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

May 3. M	Peter Wins Converts (Acts 2:37-41)
May 4. T	At the Beautiful Gate (Acts 3:1-10)
May 5. W	The Boldness of Peter and John (Acts 4:13-21)
May 6. T	Peter's Healing Ministry (Acts 5:12-16)
May 7. F	Peter and John Praying (Acts 8:14-17)
May 8. S	Peter and Dorcas (Acts 9:32-41)
May 9. S	Peter, a Gospel Pioneer (Acts 10:44-48)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 31 for the first part of our lesson. The incidents told in the fourth chapter must have come some months later; for it seems from chapter 2, verse 47, that the church enjoyed a space of freedom from persecution.

Place.—Jerusalem.

Persons.—In Acts 2:37-41, Peter and the multitude; in Acts 3:1-8, Peter, John, and a lame man; for Acts 4:13, 18-21, Peter, John, and the Sanhedrin.

Lesson Links.—Jesus selected and trained his apostles to be his witnesses of what he did, of what he was, and of what he taught. They were to make known the great scheme of human redemption which he came to make possible; but he had not told them all they needed to know. On the night of his betrayal Jesus said to them, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 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 16:12, 13.) The Holy Spirit would not only guide them into truth which Jesus had not taught them, but would bring to their memory all that Jesus had said to them. (John 14:26.) After he arose from the dead, he appeared to them by the space of forty days, speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God. (Acts 1:1-5.) These things concerning the kingdom of God are summed up in the different reports of the Great Commission. In Luke's summary of the commission we have both the place where and the time when the apostles were to begin the work of announcing the gospel. "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.) (See also Acts 1:1-8.) "And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:1-4.) The time had come and they were in the right place to begin. Peter's sermon, at least, a summary of it, is on record, His arguments were directed toward establishing in

their hearts the conviction that they had crucified him whom God had now made both their Lord and their Messiah.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

A Question and Answer (Verses 37-39)

One commentator advances the idea that Peter's audience was made up of foreign Jews, who had nothing to do with the crucifixion; yet Peter tells them in verse 23 that they had by the hands of lawless men crucified and slain Jesus. Also verse 36: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." When they heard Peter's powerful speech, and its conclusion, "they were pricked in their heart"; his words cut to the quick. They saw their guilt; they were convinced of their great guilt. This was all done by Peter's words—"when they heard this." That is the way the Holy Spirit carried conviction to their hearts, for the Holy Spirit was doing the talking through Peter. Had they not realized their guilt, they never would have said, "Brethren, what shall we do?" The very nature of the case shows that they wanted to know what to do to get rid of their guilt. Peter told them plainly what to do to get rid of their guilt: "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." It takes a lot of explaining to keep people from understanding the plain meaning of Peter's answer. The people wanted to know what to do to get rid of their guilt, and Peter told them; the circumstances give force and meaning to the answer. Prejudice may blind a person's eyes and keep him from doing what the Holy Spirit through Peter commands, but his common sense tells him plainly what the language means. As proof that he does understand the language, he will not quote it to inquiring sinners. "To you is the promise." What promise? It seems that commentators generally think the promise of the Holy Spirit is meant, but the language possibly refers to the promise made to Abraham, that in his seed all nations should be blessed. The scope of that promise and of the promise here is the same. The promise of God to Abraham included our Savior and his whole plan of salvation, and was to be extended to all nations. The call of the gospel is extended to all who feel the burden of sin, and want relief. In reality, if a man does not answer the call, it cannot be said that he has been called.

The Day's Harvest (Verses 40, 41)

Verse 40 shows that we have only a summary of what was preached—there were many other words. The plan of salvation had been completed by the Lord himself, the Holy Spirit had so preached Jesus that hearers had asked what to do, the Holy Spirit had told them in plain words what to do; the next move was theirs, and Peter exhorted them to make it—"save yourselves." And those who received his word were baptized. They could save themselves only by doing the things commanded. It is very suggestive that the command to save themselves led them to be baptized immediately. On that day about three thousand were added unto them, or, were added together. And this was the beginning of preaching repentance and remission of sins in the name of Christ. In Acts 11:15 Peter

refers to the events of this day as the beginning. There has been no other day like that day.

Peter and John Visit the Temple (Acts 3:1)

The hour of prayer, the ninth hour, was about three o'clock in the afternoon, three o'clock sun time. Some have argued that they went up to the temple to engage in the temple worship, but the record does not say so. As their business was to preach the gospel, it is more likely that they went up to the temple to preach to those who would be gathered there at the hour of prayer; but it little concerns us, if they went up to engage in the worship; for the Jewish Christians broke away from Judaism slowly. At that time a full revelation of the gospel had not been made.

The Lame Man at the Gate of the Temple (Verses 2-8)

The person upon whom a miracle of healing was performed had to be a well-known character; otherwise unbelievers could charge that, no miracle had been wrought, that it was all a fake. But here is a well-known cripple, a man forty years old, a man who had been carried daily to the door of the temple to beg alms of the worshippers. He asked Peter and John for alms. It seems that he did not know who they were. Had he known who they were, he most likely would have asked to be healed; for many wonders and signs had been done through the apostles. (Acts 2:43.) He expected money. "And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him"—gazing upon him intently—said, "Look on us." This would attract his attention, and perhaps the attention of others. The real purpose of a miracle wrought through human agency was to convince people that the human agent was sent of God. Hence, the more the people who saw the miracle the more would be likely to believe the preaching. When Peter called to the man, "Look on us," he expected to receive from them a gift. Peter's speech to the man revealed the poverty of Peter and John. "Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee." Peter was about to give the man something he had not even imagined he would receive. "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." As Jesus was a common name among the people, Peter uses words to identify the Jesus of whom he spoke. Peter claimed no honor for himself; he wanted all who heard to know that the healing of this lame man was effected in connection with the name of Jesus. To give the man courage and confidence, he took him by the hand and raised him up; "and immediately his feet and his ankle-bones received strength." There was no continued praying for the man; in fact, no praying at all. His healing was instantaneous. A little reflection will cause us to see that this was a double miracle. A man who had never walked would have to learn to walk, just as a Child learns to walk, unless he was miraculously enabled to walk. So rejoiced was he over the great gift that had been bestowed on him, that he entered the temple with Peter and John, "walking, and leaping, and praising God." It is no cause for wonder that he showed such joy and expressed such praise, for it was the first time in his forty years that he had been able to stand on his feet and walk. Here is one peculiar thing about this miracle of healing: The man received this great blessing from God when he had expected only a gift from Peter and John; God gave him that which he did not expect.

The Sanhedrin Marveled at Peter and John (Acts 4:13)

The people hurriedly gathered about Peter, John, and the healed man. Peter took advantage of this favorable opportunity to preach to the crowd. Brushing aside any idea that he and John had any power in themselves to work the miracle, he proceeded to preach Christ; but the authorities broke into the sermon, "being sore troubled because they taught the people, and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in ward unto the morrow." On the next day they were brought before the high court. The court soon found that they, the judges, were on trial, instead of Peter and John. Peter and John were bold, for they were confident of their ground. The court "perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men." They, of course, had been taught in the synagogues, as had all Jewish children; but they had not been taught by the great teachers in Jerusalem. However they for a considerable space of time had been taught by the greatest of all teachers. They were not ignorant of the things that really mattered. Their ability caused the court to marvel; the judges knew that they had been with Jesus. They could not say anything against the miracle that had been wrought through Peter and John; the man stood before them. They did not know what to do; so they sent Peter and John aside, and "conferred among themselves, 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 Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it." Their words show how extensively the miracle was known. One marvels at the stubbornness of the men of this court, at their self-imposed blindness! They were determined, if possible, to put a stop to the activities of these men; so they fell on a plan that they thought would be effective. All Jews were supposed to obey the rulings of that court.

The Prisoners Charged, Threatened, and Dismissed (Verses 18-21)

Peter and John were again called before the court. The court assumed authority above the authority of him through whose power the lame man had been healed, and delivered this charge: Do not speak nor teach in the name of Jesus. They did not know the temper of the men before them. Peter and John made a very courteous reply, in which there was an appeal to the honor and conscience of the court: "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard." The next time Peter was brought before the court, and was reminded by the court of the charge given, he was emphatic in his statement: "We must obey God rather than men." This is full loyalty to God; it should be the determination of everyone who professes to serve God. But the council could do no more than to threaten them again, and let them go. In this they were not moved by a sense of justice, but from fear of the people; "for all men glorified God for that which was done." The people had a much clearer view of matters than did the court. People in authority are frequently blinded by their own feeling of importance; too often they feel that they are about infallible. The people saw things as they were; Peter and John were determined to carry on. They reported to their own company all that had been said to them;

me company then offered up a fervent prayer, in which they said, "And now, Lord, look upon their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness." (Verses 23-30.)

SOME REFLECTIONS

If you want definite evidence that certain kinds of preachers who shy around Acts 2:38 know what it means, ask them to quote it as it is to inquiring sinners. They will not do it.

The advocates of mechanical instruments of music in the worship seek to make an argument on the fact that Peter and John went to the temple at the hour of prayer. They argue that instruments of music were used in the temple worship, and therefore Peter and John endorsed such music. Even if they went there to worship, which cannot be proved, what then? If their going there endorsed instrumental music, why not say also that they endorsed the Levitical priesthood, the burning of incense, and the offering of animal sacrifices? Their visit proves that they endorsed all the temple ceremonies, or, which is the truth, it does not prove that they endorsed any of it.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

God's part in man's salvation.
 Man's part in his own salvation.
 Compare Acts 2:38 and 3:19.
 Discuss Luke 24:46-49.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Why would Peter and John attend the temple at that hour?

Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
 Discuss the training of the apostles.
 What final preparation was required?

Verses 2-8

Tell what was necessary for a miracle to be effective as a sign.
 Why would the healing of the crippled beggar be an effective sign?
 What did he expect of Peter and John?
 Tell about his healing and his actions.

Verses 37-39

What sort of audience did Peter have?
 What caused them to ask, "What shall we do?"
 What did Peter tell them to do to get rid of their guilt?
 Discuss the question and Peter's answer.

Acts 4:13

Why were Peter and John brought before the Jewish court?
 Discuss verse 13.

Verses 40, 41

What had been done to bring salvation within the reach of man?
 The next move was whose?
 How can people save themselves?

Verses 18-21

Give outline of intervening verses.
 What did Peter and John say to the court this time?
 Discuss verses 18-21.
 Discuss the reflections.

Acts 3:1

What was the hour of prayer?

Lesson VII—May 16, 1943

PETER AND JOHN PREACH TO SAMARITANS

Acts 8:14-25

14 Now when the apostles that were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria 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 Jesus.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

25 They therefore, when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest." (John 4:35.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 96:1-9.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

May 10.	M	Preaching to the Samaritans (Acts 8:4-13)
May 11.	T	The Gift of God (Acts 8:14-25)
May 12.	W	One Flock, One Shepherd (John 10:7-18)
May 13.	T	Philip Interprets Scripture (Acts 8:26-38)
May 14.	F	Lord of All (Rom. 10:11-18)
May 15.	S	The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37)
May 16.	S	Salvation Among All Nations (Psalm 67:1-7)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—About A.D. 37.

Places.—Samaria, and some villages of the Samaritans. The city of Samaria was the capital city of the Samaritans. The city of Samaria was built by Omri, the sixth king of Israel, about 925 or 920 B.C. From that time it was the capital city of the kingdom of Israel.

Persons.—Peter, John, the believers at Samaria, and Simon the sorcerer. "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." (Verses 9, 10.)

Lesson Links.—In the church at Jerusalem there were many Grecian Jews, that is, Jews who had grown up in foreign countries, and had learned to speak the Greek language. They were not acquainted with the native language of the Hebrews, nor could the native Hebrews speak the Greek language. (Acts 6:1-6.) Evidently the "daily ministrations" had been in the hands of the Hebrews, who, not knowing the Greek language, had neglected, or were unable, to see after the Grecian widows. On complaint of the Grecian Jews seven of their own number were selected to see after the needs of these neglected widows. Of these seven Stephen and Philip were, or became, great preachers. The Greek-speaking Jews had a synagogue of their own. Stephen soon found himself engaged in heated arguments with members of this synagogue. "And they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake."

This so enraged them that they brought false charges against him before the Sanhedrin. His defense, which is recorded in the seventh chapter, contains scathing denunciations of the court and his accusers. Because they could not meet his arguments, the court was turned into a raging mob; and they killed him. "And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles." (Verse 1.) It was a determined effort on the part of these leaders of the Jews to kill the church at its beginning, but their effort failed. "They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word." These disciples had been so thoroughly taught that all could tell the good tidings wherever they went. And so the enemies of Christ, instead of destroying the church, only succeeded in scattering the gospel of Christ to the ends of the earth. If many of the churches of today were scattered abroad, not much gospel would be scattered. In this scattering of the church Philip comes into prominence. He went down to Samaria, and proclaimed to them the Christ; he also did many signs among them. Simon had been amazing them with his sorceries. "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." (See verses 5-13.)

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Apostles Send Peter and John to Samaria (Verse 14)

The apostles were the ambassadors, the representatives, of Christ, and it was their duty to see that the preaching and the affairs of the kingdom were carried on as they should be. Christ had laid that burden upon them. There had been great prejudice among the Jews in Jerusalem and Judea against the Samaritans. A Grecian Jew, as was Philip, would not be so prejudiced. He had preached to the Samaritans without prejudice; but when the success of his work became known in Jerusalem, the apostles felt that the matter must have their attention. They must see that nothing was done contrary to the gospel, and also that they should give encouragement to any work that was as it should be. They therefore immediately sent Peter and John down to Samaria.

The Holy Spirit Given the Samaritans (Verses 15-17)

Evidently Peter and John were pleased with what they found in Samaria, and prayed for the disciples, "that they might receive the Holy Spirit." This had reference to the miraculous powers of the Holy Spirit; for the language shows plainly that they received some gift, or gifts, that people do not receive when they become Christians. They received this power when the apostles laid their hands on them. As no part of the New Testament had then been written, and the apostles could not remain there, it was necessary that, at least, some of the members be endowed with spiritual gifts. By reading I Cor. 12:1-11, 28, 29, the student will see that there were various spiritual gifts. The apostles, having been baptized in the Holy Spirit, had all these gifts. The baptism of the Holy Spirit came direct from heaven; spiritual gifts were conferred by the laying

on of hands. Many writers and preachers think none but apostles could confer spiritual gifts by the laying on of hands, but there is no conclusive evidence that they are right in so thinking. Evidence seems against this idea, as we shall see farther on in this lesson; but it is not well to be dogmatic about the matter.

Simon Offers Money for Power to Confer Spiritual Gifts (Verses 18, 19)

Verse 13 says, "And Simon also himself believed: and being baptized, he continued with Philip; and beholding signs and great miracles wrought, he was amazed." These are the words of the inspired writer, and not Simon's. And yet, because he soon fell into a grievous sin, and was liable to perish for it, some, because of doctrinal reasons, argue that he merely pretended to believe, and was therefore not a real believer; but in so contending they dispute Luke's word. No man, to save a doctrinal point, should make statements that reflect on the veracity of any inspired writer. It is just as plainly stated that Simon believed and was baptized as that the Samaritans believed and were baptized. Many people have fallen into sin after having been baptized in all earnestness. Simon was more likely to fall into this particular sin than into any other; for he had been used to displaying his powers, and amazing other people. Now here was something real, something that stirred the people, and something that worked good to the people. If he had the power to impart such gifts to others, as Peter and John had, he could do real wonders. Any new convert is especially tempted along the line of his old habits. It will be noticed that Simon did not offer money for some gift conferred by the laying on of hands—did not offer Peter money to impart to him some gift by the laying on of hands, but for the power to impart gifts to others by the laying on of his hands. From this it would seem that hands had been laid on him to impart to him some gift; for if they had denied him the lesser gift, it does not seem that he would have had the courage to ask for the greater power. Simon's offer to buy this power gave us the word "simony," which means, "traffic in that which is sacred," or selling or buying ecclesiastical preferment.

"Thy Silver Perish with Thee" (Verses 20, 21)

Peter rebuked Simon severely: "Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money." The only sin here charged against Simon was the sin of thinking that he could buy the gift of God with money. That was a grievous sin. God's gifts are not matters of commerce. They are for those who prove themselves worthy of them; at least, for those who have the right attitude of heart and mind toward God. Peter gave Simon to understand just why he could not have the power to impart to others these spiritual gifts. "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God." And yet this example is sometimes referred to as proof that none but the apostles could impart spiritual gifts. If Peter had said, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thou art not an apostle," his statement would have settled the matter; but Peter did not give that as the reason why Simon could not have the power to impart spiritual gifts. The sole reason he gave was that Simon's heart was not right before

God. This seems to imply that if Simon's heart had been right before God, he might have been given the power he sought. It is a matter about which no one needs to be dogmatic.

The Way to Obtain Forgiveness (Verses 22-24)

When people who had never been Christians asked what to do, the Holy Spirit by the mouth of Peter said, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38.) But Simon was a baptized believer, who had fallen into grievous sin; what should he do? The answer in this case is just as plain as in the other: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee." Repent and pray. If it be said that the erring child of God must confess his sins, let it be remembered that a person really confesses a sin when he prays the Lord to forgive it. Simon's humbleness of spirit is shown in the request he made of Peter: "Pray ye for me to the Lord, that none of the things which ye have spoken come upon me." There was need for this repentance and prayer, for Simon was in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. It will be noticed that Peter charged Simon with only one sin and commanded him to repent of only one sin. Now, if he had never been forgiven of his alien sins, if all the sins he had ever committed were still standing against him, of what advantage would it have been to him to repent of this one sin? He would have been condemned for his other sins, if they were still unforgiven, even if he did sincerely repent of this sin of thinking to purchase the gift of God with money. The speculation as to what Simon did afterward is of no consequence in settling the matter as to whether he sincerely repented and was baptized in good faith; for many people have fallen into grievous sins after they became children of God. And if Peter had told Simon that he had sinned, but had not said, "Thy silver perish with thee," and also, "I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity," the sincerity of his obedience would not have been called in question, for it is recognized that any Christian may sin; but Peter's language shows that he had so sinned as to be in a lost condition. That would upset the notion that a child of God cannot so sin as to be lost. Hence, the notion that he was never saved, and therefore was not sincere in his pretensions. Had his lost condition never been recorded—had Luke said nothing about his wanting to purchase the gift of God with money, just as nothing was said about the conduct of the other disciples there, no one would have called in question the genuineness of his obedience; no one would have made statements that reflect on Luke's veracity as a historian. But efforts to sustain dogmas frequently lead people into strange interpretations.

Peter and John Return to Jerusalem (Verse 25)

Peter and John had finished their work in Samaria. God had sanctioned Philip's work there by giving his converts the Holy Spirit; at least some of the disciples had received spiritual gifts. Peter and John were satisfied; Philip's work was fully approved. With the spiritual gifts they could carry on the work in that city. As the apostles returned to Jerusalem, they preached the word in many

villages of the Samaritans. No account is given as to the success of their preaching in these villages.

SOME REFLECTIONS

This bitter persecution started from an argument in a synagogue. The Jews had declared Jesus to be guilty of blasphemy in claiming to be the Son of God, and had crucified him. It was the great desire of these early Christians to convince the Jews that the Jesus whom they crucified was the reigning Christ. They could not, in the very nature of the case, preach Christ and let these unbelieving Jews alone. And because the Jews could not meet their arguments, they decided to kill them. When they killed Stephen, a storm of persecution broke loose; preachers by the thousands were sent out by that persecution.

God does not force anyone to sin, he does not force anyone to enter his service, he does not force anyone to remain in his service. He leaves man free to make his own choice. A man can quit sin, if he so desires; a righteous man can turn from righteousness, if he so desires. (Ezek. 18:21-24.) Man is a free moral agent. "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.) This language was addressed to those whom Paul calls "beloved of God," "saints." These men were saved men, yet they might present themselves as servants unto the obedience of sin unto death. Simon did that; and if he did not repent as Peter commanded him to do, he was lost forever. But the command also opened up a way of escape from perishing.

It is fortunate that we have the report of the visit of Peter and John to Samaria; otherwise we would not have such clear information as to what an erring child of God should do that he might be forgiven of any sin into which he might have fallen. From the book of Acts we therefore learn how to become Christians, and how erring children of God may find forgiveness.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Discussing with those who oppose the truth.
 Stephen and his fearless speech—his death.
 The results of the persecution that began with the stoning of Stephen.
 The planting of the church in Samaria.
 Spiritual gifts.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
 Discuss the persecution that scattered the Jerusalem church.
 Discuss Philip's work at Samaria.
 Tell about Simon's activities before he heard Philip.

Verse 14

Why were the apostles concerned about the work in Samaria?
 What evidence that Peter was not the

authority, or the pope, in that group?

Verses 15-17

How were spiritual gifts imparted to the Samaritans?
 Discuss the difference between spiritual gifts and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Verses 18, 19

Who said Simon believed?
 Why do some contend that he was not sincere?

What sin is a new convert most likely to fall into?
 What did Simon try to purchase?
 Why would that power appeal to Simon more than to others?

Verses 20, 21

Repeat what Peter said to Simon.
 Why did he not have either part or lot in the matter?
 What does Peter's statement imply?

Verses 22-24

What had Peter told alien sinners to do to be saved?
 What did he tell Simon to do?
 Why the difference?
 What then did Simon ask Peter to do?
 What shows that Simon needed forgiveness for only one sin?
 Discuss any other point that occurs to you about Simon.

Verse 25

Discuss verse 25.
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VIII—May 23, 1943

BOOKS WRITTEN BY PETER AND JOHN

1 Pet. 5:12-14; 2 Pet. 3:14-16; 1 John 1:1-5; Rev. 1:19, 20

12 By Silvanus, our faithful brother, as I account him, I have written unto you briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God: stand ye fast therein.

13 She that is in Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Mark my son.

14 Salute one another with a kiss of love. Peace be unto you all that are in Christ.

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

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

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

1 That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life

2 (And the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us);

3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ:

4 And these things we write, that our joy may be made full.

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.

19 Write therefore the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter;

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks are seven churches.

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

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 119:1-8.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

May 17. M

May 18. T

May 19. W

May 20. T

May 21. F

May 22. S

May 23. S

Boldness of Peter and John (Acts 4:13-20)

Peter Restored (John 21:15-17)

Peter and John in Death Chamber (Luke 8:49-56)

Peter's Instruction to Elders (1 Pet. 5:1-5)

John Discusses the Will of God (1 John 5:13-17)

Peter and John Suffer Persecution (Acts 4:1-10)

Death of Peter and John Foretold (John 21:18-23)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Some place the dates of the First and the Second Epistle of Peter A.D. 67 or 68, though the First Epistle may have been written at an earlier date. The First Epistle of John is supposed to have been written toward the close of the first century; so also the book of the Revelation, though some present strong arguments to prove that Revelation was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. No one can be dogmatic about these dates.

Places.—Apparently the First Epistle of Peter was written at Babylon, though some think Babylon was a mystic name for Rome. Where the other books of the lesson were written is not certain, excepting Revelation. It was written on the Isle of Patmos.

Persons.—Peter and John, and the people to whom they wrote. The Revelation was written for the special benefit of the churches in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. (Rev. 1' 11.)

Lesson Links.—It has been said that the book of Acts was written to teach us how to become Christians, and that the Epistles were written to teach us how to live the Christian life. That distinction is useful, if it is not made too ironclad. The Acts tells us how people became Christians, but it tells us much more. It gives us many lessons on church activities and individual devotion to the Lord. It is also a history of the early church, a history of spreading the gospel and planting churches. In other words, the book is rich in information that every Christian needs to know. It is true that the Epistles were written for the special benefit of Christians, but a Christian needs to know more than simply his everyday practical duties. That he may be more steadfast in his religion, he needs to have an exalted conception of the Christ and his sacrifice, of the church and its worth, of the plans and purposes of Christ; in short, he needs to know the fundamentals of the scheme of human redemption. These are set forth more fully in the Epistles than elsewhere. And one of the fundamentals plainly set forth in the Epistles, and yet so often overlooked or ignored, is that the gospel plan of salvation is a new and living way, and that Judaism with all its rites and ceremonies ended at the cross. And to stimulate Christians to put forth their best efforts in the service of the Lord Christ, these Epistles set before the children of God motives as high as heaven and as deep as hell.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON**Peter Sends His Epistle by Silvanus (Verses 12-14)**

Peter wrote this First Epistle "to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." If the student will consult a map of Bible countries, he will discover that these districts lie in what we now know as Asia Minor. It was the territory in which Paul had labored so extensively. It is said that Silas is short for Silvanus, and that this Silvanus was the Silas who traveled extensively with Paul and was associated with him in both Epistles to the Thessalonians. (1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1.) Our first introduction to him is in the fifteenth chapter where he is described as a chief man among the brethren in Jerusalem, and also a prophet. (Acts 15:22, 32.) Peter refers to him as a faithful brother; and if the student will follow him in his travels with Paul, he can see

that Peter correctly describes him. With persecution raging, a messenger carrying a message of hope and encouragement to Christians needed to be faithful to his trust. He also needed to be a wise traveler, a man who had had experience in meeting all sorts of dangers. None could have been selected that was better fitted for such trust than was faithful Silvanus. Peter asserts that this gospel, this scheme of human redemption, is the true grace of God. This, of course, means that the grace of God is manifested in no other way. Paul states this truth in other words when he tells us that the gospel is God's power for saving men. (Rom. 1:16.) There is no other power that will save, no other manifestation of God's grace. For that reason Peter exhorts, "Stand ye fast therein." That is a significant exhortation; study it. It shows clearly that a Christian has something to do in remaining in the grace of God; there would be no sense to the exhortation if the Christian could not do otherwise. The grace of God does not remain with the Christian unless he stands in it. Commentators differ as to whether Peter refers to the church in Babylon, or to some Christian woman. There is nothing in the Greek text that tells which is meant. As Peter names no certain woman, the churches in the districts mentioned in his introduction would not know what woman in that far-off country would be sending greetings to them. It seems logical to conclude that he meant the church in Babylon. There is no need that we waste time and space in sifting the various theories as to what Babylon is meant. The church in Babylon saluted the churches in the districts mentioned; "and so doth Mark my son." This must mean that Mark was his son in the gospel. The brethren were also to salute one another with a kiss of love. It was to be a kiss of love, and not of pretense. That was then a common form of salutation; as the handshake has taken the place of the kiss in this country, it should be warm and hearty, not a mere form. In another place the apostle Paul exhorts that it should be a holy kiss, not a kiss of hypocrisy, nor a kiss of lust. And today a handshake may be either, or it may be sincere.

Exhortation to Diligence (2 Pet. 3:14-16)

"Wherefore." This word shows that what follows grows out of what had just been said. (Read verses 8-13.) With the Lord a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years; with him time does not count. He is not slack concerning his promises, though he may bear long with us, wishing that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come, the day "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." What manner of persons therefore should we be in holy living and godliness, "looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God"? "But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." On account of these great and awful miracles which are yet to be, Peter exhorts, "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." We must live clean and honest lives. We must not become impatient with God if he delays the coming of the great day. His long-suffering, his bearing long with sinful man, is for our salvation. Paul had written of these things according to the wisdom given him,

that is, according to the inspiration of the Spirit. As Peter speaks of "all his epistles," it is thought that Peter wrote this letter after Paul had been executed; but he could have written it before Paul's death, and referred to all the epistles Paul had written up to that time. "Wherein are some things hard to be understood." Any student of Paul's writings has found many passages that are hard to understand; but the conscientious student of the scriptures will not wrest Paul's writings, nor any other scripture, to his own destruction; but those who are ignorant of God's principles of dealing with human beings, and those who are unsteadfast, those whose faith is wishy-washy, do wrest the scriptures to make them mean anything that suits their fancy. The word translated "wrest" has several meanings, one of which is "to torture an accused man to make him tell that which he otherwise would not tell." The ignorant and un-steadfast therefore torture the scriptures, not to get the truth out of them, but to make them say what they want them to say. Many a man has been tortured for the same reason, that is, to make him tell, not the truth, but what his accusers want him to say. Men may thus torture the scriptures to their own destruction. Men make up in their own minds some theory, and then torture the scriptures to make them say what they want said. God answers people according to what they have in their own hearts. (Ezek. 14:1-11.) Such men perish, "because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. 2:10-12.) How fatal it is to torture the scriptures!

"We Have Seen, and Bear Witness" (1 John 1:1-5)

It is generally understood that the apostle John lived many years after all the other apostles were dead; but he must have included the other apostles in the experiences mentioned in these first five verses. Notice that he uses the plural pronoun we in these verses, and in the first verse of the next chapter he begins the use of the first person singular. His beginning here is similar to the beginning of his gospel. In both he affirms the pre-existence of Christ. The apostles had heard him with their own ears, they had seen him with their own eyes, and had handled him. They had touched him. His appearance was therefore not a phantom; he was as real as was any other person. They were therefore competent witnesses. John here calls him the Word of life; in John 1:4 John declares that in him is life. Life, self-existent, inherent, is in him. "And the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." Not only did the Word have life in him, but he is life; this life was manifested in the person of Jesus the Christ. Their purpose in declaring what they had seen and heard is clearly stated: "that ye also may have fellowship with us." John states his purpose in writing his gospel in these words: "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.) As our faith leads us to have fellowship with the apostles, it also puts us into fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." By believing we therefore establish a

partnership with the Father and his Son Jesus the Christ—a partnership in saving ourselves and others. Paul states our part in this partnership in these words: "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.) John states another object in writing: "That our joy may be made full." If his letter stirred them up to devoted Christian living, his joy would be full. "Greater joy have I none than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth." (3 John 4.) Of course, all the epistles written to churches and to individuals were written to promote more intelligent, devoted Christian living.

John Commanded to Write to Seven Churches in Asia (Rev. 1:19, 20)

John was in the Isle of Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ• It was on the Lord's day• One who was walking in the midst of seven golden candlesticks and holding seven stars in his hand said to John: "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, he faced a most glorious person, and was so overcome that he fell at his feet as one dead. The Lord reassured him and again commanded him to write: "Write therefore the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter." Write things past, present, and future. We never could have been sure as to what the candlesticks and the stars signified, had not the Lord told us. "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches" —the messengers of the seven churches; no doubt these were messengers which the churches had sent to do what they could for John. "The seven candlesticks are seven churches." A candlestick sustains that which gives the light; the church as a candlestick upholds the word of God which gives the light• (Phil. 2:15, 16.) But there are too many professed candlesticks that have no candle, or else the candle is not lighted.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Sane people act from motive. The promises of God act as powerful motives, and so do the threats of punishment. These motives stimulate to higher living. Promises and threats therefore have a mighty part in the development of character.

Every book in the Bible was written for a purpose; but there is one general purpose that controlled in the writing of all the books of the New Testament, namely, the making known the great scheme of human redemption. This scheme of redemption is called the gospel. Its intended effect is leading men out of sin into forgiveness, and fitting and preparing them for habitation with God in the great beyond.

In Bible language a prophet or other public teacher is a man of God• We have no prophets now, but we have teachers, preachers. In their work what shall they use? What equipment have they? "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." (2 Tim. 3:16, 17.)

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of the New Testament writings.
 Our attitude toward God's revealed will.
 A study of 2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
 Show that the book of Acts contains information helpful to Christians.
 What is the general purpose of the Epistles?

Verses 12-14

To whom did Peter write his first Epistle?
 By whom was it sent?
 Give information about this man.
 What is the true grace of God?
 Based on that, what exhortation did Peter give?
 How does that show human responsibility?
 Discuss the salutation.

2 Pet. 3:14-16

What is the significance of the word "wherefore"?
 What exhortation does Peter give?
 Discuss this exhortation.

Why was this exhortation given?
 Why is God long-suffering?
 What does Peter say of Paul's writings?
 How do men wrest the scriptures, and why?
 What is the result of such torturing of scripture?
 If a man does not love the truth, what is the result?

1 John 1:1-5

Compare John's beginning here with his beginning in his gospel.
 What assurance does he give that they could identify Jesus?
 "The Word of life"—what is meant?
 What purpose did John have in writing this letter?
 What other purpose did he give?

Rev. 1:19, 20

Discuss matters leading up to verses 19, 20.
 Discuss verses 19, 20, especially the stars and the candlesticks.
 How may a church give light?
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IX—May 30, 1943

PETER'S COUNSEL TO SCATTERED CHRISTIANS

1 Pet. 1:1; 2:11-25

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

18 Servants, be in subjection to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

19 For this is acceptable, if for conscience toward God a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully.

20 For what glory is it if when ye sin and buffeted for it, ye shall take it patiently? but if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye shall take it are patiently, this is acceptable with God.

21 For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps:

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

24 Who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose strides ye were healed.

25 For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king." (1 Pet. 2:17.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 12:1-8.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

May 24. M	Exhorting to Good Works (1 Pet. 2:11-25)
May 25. T	The Christian's Hope (1 Pet. 1:3-9)
May 26. W	A Changed Life (1 Pet. 1:13-23)
May 27. T	A Greeting of Love (2 Cor. 2:1-4)
May 28. F	James Encourages Scattered Christians (James 1:1-12)
May 29. S	Paul Autographs a Letter (Gal. 6:1-11)
May 30. S	Faithful Under Fire (Acts 8:1-8)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 67, and yet it is possible that it was written at an earlier date.

Place.—Babylon.

Persons.—Peter and the scattered Christians to whom he wrote. *Lesson Links*.—The districts mentioned in verse 1 of our lesson are in what we now know as Asia Minor. It seems that Paul and his helpers first carried the gospel to that part of Asia, but only a small part of what Paul and his helpers did is recorded. Hence, Paul must have preached much more extensively in Asia Minor than Luke gives an account of. Some of his activities in that country may be seen by reading chapters 13 and 14 of Acts; also 15:41; 16:1-10; also chapter 19. Peter's letter to the churches in the districts named indicates strongly that he was well acquainted with them and was very much attached to them. Origen, we are told, reported a supposition that Peter visited these regions. This must have been after the incident mentioned by Paul in Gal. 2:11-15. We have no account of Peter's activities after this, but he was too full of energy and zeal to remain inactive. It would be depressing on these churches when they heard of Paul's imprisonment, and they too suffering persecution. They would stand greatly in need of encouragement at such times. With Peter's zeal and devotion, if he could have possibly done so, he would have gladly gone among them to encourage and strengthen them. But that he did this, we have little more than tradition and the circumstances of the case to rely on. However, when tradition and what would seem to be the natural course of events combine, it creates a strong probability. So long as there were only a few believers in any community, the unbelievers gave them little, or no, trouble; but when believers became numerous, opposition developed. Numerous statements in this first letter show that the disciples in the regions named were undergoing considerable persecution. Peter's letter would give them courage and comfort.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

To Whom Written (Verse 1)

The signature, according to ancient custom, came first. Peter identifies himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Some commentators

refer to him as the chief apostle, but Peter makes no such claim for himself. To vindicate his apostleship against his traducers, Paul said of himself, "For I reckon that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles." Again, "For in nothing was I behind the very chiefest apostles." (See 2 Cor. 11:5; 12:11.) So Peter could not have been in any official sense, or in any organizational arrangement, the chief apostle. But this does not detract from his greatness as an apostle. "To the elect." In the former dispensation the Jews were God's elect, but they were broken off because of unbelief, and that means because of their disobedience. (Rom. 11:20.) Then they, as well as Gentiles, had to come in by faith. God chooses those who obey him—they are his elect. This letter was addressed to the elect who were sojourners in the districts named. A sojourner is not a settled inhabitant, one who is passing through a country, or is there only temporarily. He does not claim that country as his permanent home. The earth is not the permanent home of the Christian; here he is a sojourner. A sojourner does not have his mind set on the country through which he is traveling, but on the country whither he is going. A man is not going to seek to accumulate property in a country where he considers himself a sojourner, especially will he not accumulate property that he cannot take with him to the place he intends to go. As sojourners, therefore, we should lay up our treasures in heaven. (Matt. 6:19-21.) By using the term, "Dispersion," Peter was not, as some think, writing strictly to Jewish Christians, but to scattered Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles; for he refers to them as those "who in time past were no people, but now are the people of God." (1 Pet. 2:10.) Space in a short lesson will not permit a description of the districts mentioned. The student should consult a Bible dictionary or an encyclopedia.

A General Exhortation (1 Pet. 2:11)

There is a slight difference between a sojourner and a pilgrim; a pilgrim may be a mere wayfarer. Neither is counted as really belonging to the place where he chances to be. That again emphasizes the truth that a Christian does not count this world as his permanent abiding place. "I beseech you"—I beg, entreat you—"to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." "Fleshly lusts"—all the things of the world which the flesh craves, whether it be to gratify pride, or ambition for worldly glory, or immoral practices. Abstain from such, do not indulge in such things as tend to lead one from attending to his soul's well-being. Fleshly lusts war against the soul, that is, they destroy the best interests of the soul. "But I say, Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would." (Gal. 5:16, 17.) (The translators understood that spirit here refers to the Holy Spirit, but the contrast Paul makes shows that it is man's own spirit.) The Christian then was surrounded by bitter enemies, who would seize on any pretext to embarrass, or to persecute, him. That is true in a milder way now. The Christian therefore must walk circumspectly—he must be honest, sober, law-abiding, and helpful to others. Instead of their continuing their evil speech against the Christian, they might, by his good works, which they see, be led to glorify God by yielding

to him in obedience. A devoted Christian is a bright light in a dark world. "Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 5:16.)

Subjection to Government Enjoined (Verses 12-17)

Here Peter begins to tell them how to live, or behave, "seemly among the Gentiles." Now he gives them some specific directions as to how they should conduct themselves. Because they had been made free in Christ, and because he was their king, there was a tendency with some untaught Christians to feel that their freedom in Christ released them from any obligations to human governments; and inasmuch as Christ Jesus was now their king, they would feel that obedience to any human government was disloyalty to him. This attitude may have been the cause of some of the persecutions they suffered. "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." The marginal reading informs us that the Greek word here translated "ordinance" means "creation." Human governments create certain functions of government and government functionaries; Christians are to be subject to all these, "whether to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him." We are to do this for the Lord's sake, that is, because the Lord requires it; such obedience, if submitted to willingly, does not interfere with our freedom. The purpose of government is to punish the criminal and to protect the law-abiding citizen, but governments sometimes become tyrannical; yet it is a sorry government that is not better than no government. Even under the tyrant Nero, Paul said, "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God." (Rom. 13:1.) We must therefore obey the laws of the land, whether they suit us or not, so long as they do not require us to do wrong. Freedom from sin is not license to commit sin. There can be no peace and prosperity where there is no law, or where law is disregarded; Prompt and faithful obedience to the laws of the land helps to "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." Hence, "Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king." It is plain therefore that the man who disobeys the laws of the land also disobeys God, for God commands such obedience. The man who obeys only the laws that he likes is in spirit an anarchist. And a man who claims the protection of his government and avoids paying his full share of taxes is dishonest; and if he does not make full rendition of his property, he is a liar.

The Duty of Servants (Verses 18-20)

In ancient times slavery was common. Men and women were bought and sold. A slave had no legal rights, and so the nature of his treatment depended on the disposition of his owner and family. Many of these servants were captives taken in war, and sold by the government to its citizens. Some therefore would be more intelligent and refined than their masters. Such men would be greatly humiliated, and would resent being bossed and ill-treated by a master much inferior to them. The marginal reading in the American Standard Version says the Greek word translated servants in this place means "household servants." Such servants would be constantly subjected to the whims and ill temper of the master, the wife, and

the children, much more than the servants who worked in the fields. Possibly this is the reason Peter singled out the household servants for his special exhortations. They had the greater need for encouragement. If these household servants were Christians, they would be subjected to punishment for not joining in the worship of the household gods. In this they would suffer for their conscience toward God. Such devotion would be acceptable to God. To suffer for evil-doing deserves no praise. These principles will hold good with reference to those who are not slaves: If we suffer patiently for doing right, whether we be slaves or free men, "this is acceptable" to God. It is disgusting to see a man bring suffering on himself by his own wrongdoing, and then complain about being persecuted.

Christ an Example in Suffering (Verses 21-23)

In these verses Peter is still addressing his remarks to these household servants, but what he says is applicable to all Christians. Christ is our example in suffering. He "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth," yet he suffered, suffered terribly. Guile is deceitful cunning. Although Christ did no sin nor deceived anyone, yet he suffered; why be rebellious then, if a Christian suffers unjustly? When he was before the Sanhedrin and later before Pilate, Jesus indulged in no abusive speech, nor did he make any threats. Of all who were connected with his trial, condemnation, and crucifixion, he was the calmest. He said very little; "but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." He was wholly submissive to the will of his Father. Should we therefore fume and fuss, and talk abusively to, or about, those who persecute us for righteousness' sake? And should we be surprised when persecution comes upon us? These persecutions may become so fierce as to be called fiery. "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: but insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice." (1 Pet. 4:12, 13.)

By Whose Stripes We Are Healed (Verses 24, 25)

Sin is personal guilt; it attaches to the one who commits it. The only way therefore that Christ could bear our sins in his own body was to offer his body as a sacrifice for our sins. Even then our guilt remains with us till we repent, even till our sins are forgiven. His death for our sins made it possible for us to die unto sin. Certainly no one dies to sin so long as he cherishes sin in his heart. By repentance sin is put out of the heart, but the death to sin is not complete till that sin is forgiven. In baptism we are forgiven. (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38.) Paul states it another way when he says we were baptized into death. (Rom. 6:4.) This was made possible by the death of Christ, by whose stripes we are healed. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isa. 53:4-6.) Before Christ came we were going away

like sheep, like sheep without a shepherd. It is said of Jesus, "When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd." (Matt. 9:38.) But those who have now obeyed Christ are "returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." As the Twenty-Third Psalm seems to be prophetic of this dispensation, it would be well for the student to ponder it in this connection. "And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away." (1 Pet. 5:4.)

SOME REFLECTIONS

When Christianity was young in the world, and had not demonstrated its worth in the lives of its new converts, miracles served the purpose of proving its divine origin. In a measure godly living takes the place of miracles as proof of the power and worth of the religion of Christ. A godly life demonstrates what Christianity will do for people; such living makes people purer, more honest, more truthful, and more helpful to others. As its fruit is good, it must be a good tree, for a tree is known by its fruits. Any thoughtful person knows that a wrong standard of living will not make people better; living up to a lie does not improve character; and a thoughtful person knows that Christianity makes people better. There are frequent admonitions that people so live as to lead others to become Christians. A professed Christian that does not live right hinders.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

How persecution affects different people.
The Christian's duty to others.
The sufferings of Christ.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text,

Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
Who seems to have carried the gospel first to Asia Minor?
What likely interested Peter in the churches in the districts mentioned?
For what special reasons would they need encouragement?

Verse 1

Where was the signature put in ancient writings?
What evidence that Peter was not the chief of the apostles?
What is a sojourner?
What lesson do we get out of the fact that Christians are sojourners?
Name the countries mentioned.

1 Pet. 2:11

Discuss this verse.
What does Paul say of the flesh and the spirit?

Verses 12-17

Why would the early Christians likely fail to obey the civil authorities?
What is the duty of Christians toward the civil authorities?
Discuss what Paul said on this point.
Discuss verse 17.

Verses 18-20

Whom was Peter addressing in these verses?
What did he exhort them to do?
How much applies to us?

Verses 21-23

Discuss verses 21, 22.
How did Christ bear his sufferings?
Why did he suffer?

Verses 24, 25

How did Christ bear our sins in his body?
When do we become free from the guilt of sin?
Read and comment on Isa. 53:4-6.
Who returns to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls?
What is the meaning of the word bishop?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson X—June 6, 1943
PETER COMFORTS PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS
 1 Pet. 3:13-17; 4:12-16; 5:6-10

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

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

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

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

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

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 insomuch 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.

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.

GOLDEN TEXT—"For it is better, if the will of God should so will, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing." (1 Pet. 3:17.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Heb. 11:32 to 12:2.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

May 31.	M	The Comfort of a Good Conscience (1 Pet. 3:13-17)
June 1.	T	Comfort in Trial (1 Pet. 4:12-19)
June 2.	W	Comfort in Temptation (1 Pet. 5:6-11)
June 3.	T	Pleasure in Adversities (2 Cor. 12:7-10)
June 4.	F	How to Be Strong (Eph. 6: 10-16)
June 5.	S	Fellow Sufferers (2 Cor. 1:3-11)
June 6.	S	Comfort for God's People (Isa. 40:1-11)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 67, and yet it is probable that it was written at an earlier date.

Place.—Babylon.

Persons.—Peter and the scattered Christians to whom he wrote.

Lesson Links.—To get as much of this letter in regular order, let us study some of the things in the first part of the third chapter. There must be a head to any well-organized body, group, or government. It is as true of the family as in any other institution. Hence Peter says, "Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands." This does not mean that the husband should be a tyrant. Jesus is head of the church, but he is not a tyrant. If the wife has due rever-

as he should, there will be no trouble. People have thought that verses three and four prohibit the wearing of any sort of jewelry; if so the language prohibits her "putting on apparel." She should not depend on such for her adornment. It is a figure of speech similar to that used by the Savior: "Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life." (John 6:27.) Our Lord was not prohibiting work, but used that form of expression to emphasize the need of working mostly for the spiritual food. We would use the words "not only, but rather." And so in the verses under consideration. No woman should make dressing up in fine things her ambition; there is something of infinitely more importance. She should not depend on fine things for her chief adornment. Her adornment should be "the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit." She should be gentle, and not boisterous and fussy. God puts a great price on such adornment. But this does not mean that she should neglect her outward appearance. As a general thing women are weaker physically than men. A man should realize this, and not expect her to do the heavy work that nature fits him to do; nor should the husband otherwise impose on his wife, for she is also a joint heir of the grace of life. There should therefore be this ideal relationship between husband and wife, "to the end that your prayers be not hindered." "Finally, be ye all like-minded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humble minded: not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing; for hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing." (Verses 8, 9.)

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Suffering for Righteousness' Sake (Verses 13, 14)

No one persecutes a Christian for feeding the hungry, or clothing the naked, or attending the needs of the sick and helpless; but the Christian may be persecuted in spite of these good deeds. Once the Jews said to Jesus, "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." (John 10:31-33.) No matter how much a man may help the needy and helpless, if he preaches Christ as the Savior and king, and that he will save only those in whose hearts and lives he is allowed to reign as king, he will be persecuted. The preaching of Christ in ancient times, not the doing of good deeds, brought upon Christians such bitter persecutions. Even the Jews in Jerusalem did not object to the good deeds done by the apostles and others, but they persecuted them "because they taught the people, and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead," "and charged them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus." (Acts 4:1, 2, 18.) "But even if ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye." The language shows that it is not likely that any would suffer for doing right to his fellows; but if that should happen, the Lord will bless the doer. But let no man bring persecution on himself, or rather punishment, for wrongdoing, and then claim the reward of the persecuted. But if a man does suffer persecution for doing right, he should not fear, nor be troubled; his destiny is in the hands of God.

On Giving a Reason Concerning Our Hope (Verses 15-17)

A man should always have a reason, not an excuse, for whatever he is and for whatever he does. Are you a Christian? What is your reason for being one? Have you any hope of future bliss? What is your reason for that hope? In ancient times, the Christian would be called on to give a reason for his faith in Christ. To be ready at all times to give a reason for hoping in Christ, he would have to be able to defend his faith in Jesus as the Savior and Messiah; he would be called on to prove that Jesus was what he claimed to be. It is not likely that many professed Christians of today could make much headway against the arguments, or sophistries, of an infidel; yet Peter tells us to be ready always to do so, "with meekness and fear." In defending our hope against all assailants, we should not do so in a spirit of daring, arrogance, or impudence. However the spirit of your opponent will greatly determine the proper manner of defense, as it did with our Savior. There is no need to try to convince a man who gives every evidence of being a dishonest persecutor; to do so is to cast pearl before swine. Yet a proper answer, backed up by the right kind of living, will do much toward putting to shame the opponent. It is impossible to convince some people; the majority were not convinced by the Lord and his apostles. But if your good works and your defense of your faith and hope do not stop the persecution, "it is better, if the will of God should so will, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing." If a man suffer for evil-doing, he is reaping his just reward; if the punishment is just, he is not being persecuted. But persecution is the common lot of Christians. "Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3:12.) No one cares how much good you do, if you leave Christ Jesus out of any connection with your life. Jesus informed his disciples that that very condition would prevail: "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.) Here again the cause of the persecution is Jesus the Christ. And why? Jesus said the world hated him because he testified of it that its works were evil. (John 15:18.)

Even Though You Suffer Persecution, Rejoice (1 Pet. 4:12, 13)

It is well to read carefully the verses between the part of our lesson just studied and that which we now study. Not much is said in this First Epistle of Peter that does not have some bearing on the persecutions these brethren were undergoing. As bad as persecution seems, such suffering for Christ, if rightly endured, leads to greater devotion to him, and to greater steadfastness of character. (Rom. 5:3-5.) "Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind." Verses 7-9 deal with personal relations among the brethren rather than with persecution. Peter then gives this admonition: "If any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God; if any man ministereth, ministering as of the strength which God supplieth: that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and the dominion for ever and ever." Peter then, in verse 12, reverts to the matter of persecution. Metals were tested by fire; and as persecution tests the metal of Christians, he refers to persecution as "the fiery trial among you."

This is perhaps the fire Paul referred to when he said, "But if any man buildeth on the foundation gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble; 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." (1 Cor. 3:12, 13.) Paul is here speaking of the converts men build into the church. Peter says these fiery trials come upon us to prove us. In suffering persecutions Christians are partakers of Christ's sufferings; many of these early saints suffered unto death, as Christ did. But of one prospect they could rejoice, and so can we, "that at the revelation of his glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy."

Suffering as a Christian (Verses 14-16)

"If ye are reproached for the name of Christ." Here again we have the reason the Christians were suffering persecution; it was not because of the good life they lived, but because of their faith in Christ, and their persistently preaching him. But even so, they were in a happy state, because the Spirit of God and the spirit of glory rested upon them. If they suffered for their faith in Christ Jesus, there was reward for them. But even a Christian may do wrong, and have to suffer for it. "Let none of you suffer as a murderer." A murderer is one who is guilty of "the offense of unlawfully killing a human being with malice aforethought, express or implied." Certainly no Christian should be guilty of that crime; nor should he be a thief. A man who makes a debt when he has no intention of ever paying the debt might not come under the definition of thief, but he is no better. A Christian must be honest; if a man is not honest, he is not a Christian. He must not be an evil-doer. This word, "evil-doer," covers the whole ground—a Christian must not engage in anything that is not right; he must not even be a meddler in other men's matters. Too many people meddle in things that do not concern them in the least degree. But there is no reason for shame, if a person suffers for being a follower of Christ, "but let him glorify God in this name." A man might assume to wear the name Christian without being a Christian; calling a man a Christian does not make him one. A Christian is a follower of Christ; only by living as a Christian can one glorify God in this name. He brings shame on the cause he professes to uphold if he fails to live as a Christian should. Neither can anyone glorify God in the name Christian if he refuses to wear the name Christian, but glories in wearing some other name; nor can he glorify God in the name Christian by tacking some other name on the name Christian.

Peter Admonishes and Comforts (1 Pet. 5:6-10)

Read the first five verses of this chapter. Perhaps to give force to his exhortation to elders, Peter reminded them that he was a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ. "Tend the flock of God." Perform the duties of a shepherd; elders should be wide-awake and watchful. In times of great persecution, the elders and other leaders would likely suffer worst; this might deter some from performing the duties of elders. If so, such should not pretend to be elders. They should act willingly. But they are not bosses; they are not lords; they should be examples. "Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elders." Young people should respect the older

people. What some young people, even some young preachers, call "old fogyism" may be wisdom gained by study and experience. "Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another: for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." If we do not willingly humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, he will humble us to our shame. He exalts those who willingly humble themselves before him. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." (James 4:6.) "For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke 14:11.) Because God is our Father, we should know that he cares for us. "Be sober." This seems to refer to soberness of mind—be sober in thought and in judgment. People may become intoxicated on many things besides alcoholic drinks. People may even become intoxicated on religion; this leads to wild speculation, fanaticism, and eventually to persecuting others. And a Christian may even become intoxicated on too much admiration for one man. This is frequently seen in the devotion of some members to a certain preacher. We should be watchful; and most of all, we need to watch ourselves. If we do not watch, we may leave an opening for the devil to enter. It is not meant that the devil roars like a lion, but that he seeks to devour—gulp down—like a lion. If the devil cannot swallow up the Christian under any circumstances, why this warning? Why watch to see that he does not do what he cannot do? And why withstand him, if we are in no danger of him? By the phrase, "in your brethren who are in the world," Peter may have meant the Jewish world, Judea, for the word sometimes has that significance; or he may have meant all the other brethren in the whole world. Possibly the brethren in the regions mentioned in the first verse of this letter thought they were being persecuted worse than were Christians in other regions. Peter gives them this comforting assurance: "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."

SOME REFLECTIONS

Sometimes it seems that some put more stress on doing something than upon being what Christians should be. If a man will be what he should be, he will do what he should do. The Bible puts emphasis on character. "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world." (Tit. 2:11, 12.) There should be the transformation of character. "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Rom. 12:2.)

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Giving a reason for our hope.
How persecutions prove us.
Discuss 1 Pet. 5:8, 9.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Discuss the relation of husband and wife.
What is said about a woman's adornment?
In what sense is she weaker than man?

Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

Verses 13, 14

Why are Christians persecuted?
 Why was Jesus persecuted?
 What if people do suffer for righteousness' sake?

Verses 15-17

Discuss the grounds for our hope.
 What determines the matter of our giving reason for our hope?
 Why is it better to suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing?

1 Pet. 4:12, 13

Discuss the points that interest you in verses 1-11 of chapter 4.
 How may one be benefitted by persecution?
 Why does Peter refer to persecution as fiery trial?

Verses 14-16

Discuss verse 14.
 What caution or admonition does Peter give in verse 15?
 How may we glorify God in the name Christian?
 Discuss verse 17.

1 Pet. 5:6-10

In the first part of the chapter what does Peter say to elders?
 What does he say to younger people?
 Discuss verses 6, 7.
 Discuss verse 8.
 What is said of the devil, and of our duty in the matter?
 Discuss verse 10.
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XI—June 13, 1943

GOD'S EXCEEDING GREAT PROMISES

2 Pet. 1:1-11

1 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and the Saviour Jesus Christ:

2 Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

3 Seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue;

4 Whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust.

5 Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge;

6 And in your knowledge self-control; and in your self-control patience; and in your patience godliness;

7 And in your godliness brotherly kindness; and in your brotherly kindness love.

8 For if these things are yours and abound they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins.

10 Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble:

11 For thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

GOLDEN TEXT—"He hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature." (2 Pet. 1:4.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Col. 3:12-17.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

June 7. M
 June 8. T
 June 9. W
 June 10. T
 June 11. F
 June 12. S
 June 13. S

God's Great Promises (2 Pet. 1:1-11)
 God's Promises Strictly Kept (2 Pet. 3:8-18)
 God's Promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-5)
 God's Promise to Paul (Acts 26:12-18)
 God's Promise of Salvation (Isa. 44:21-23)
 God's Promise of Immortality (1 Cot. 15:50-58!)
 God's Promise of Heaven (John 14:1-4)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 68.

Place.—It is not known where this letter was written.

Persons.—Peter and the saints everywhere.

Lesson Links.—This lesson has to do with the development of character. The only permanent thing anyone can build is character; and that is one thing all people are doing, whether or not they think of it. Every responsible person builds his own character, be that character good or bad; but character built without thought and earnest effort is ruinous. Nothing worth while can be built without careful thinking. The first thing in building a right character is to turn away from thoughts and deeds that corrupt and corrode. A man must think on his ways, or he will not be able to see the evil in them. "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies." (Psalm 119:59.) "For as he thinketh within himself, so is he." (Prov. 23:7.) Reformation comes from right thinking. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Phil. 4:8.) A good character is not built in a day; it comes by persistent effort. "Be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Rom. 12:2.) The word of God in the heart and the mind is the transforming power. The church is God's character factory. Building character is an individual matter, but each member may help others. "Wherefore exhort one another, and build each other up, even as also ye do." (1 Thess. 5:11.) "So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another." (Rom. 14:19.) The first thing to do in helping a sinner to build a right character is to turn him from sin. The church does this through its members; it is an individual's duty to do what he can to lead people to the Lord. The individual Christian does not have to wait for authority from the church to do this, or to discharge any other duty. If a member of the church works as God directs, he is doing church work, even if none of the other members know anything about it. The body works through its members; the members move as the head directs. The commands of God are directed to the individual.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON**Peter's Signature and Salutation (Verses 1, 2)**

The name of the writer comes first—an ancient custom. All people who do the will of Jesus Christ are his servants, but Peter was more than a servant; he was also an apostle. Yet in doing his work of an apostle he was serving Christ, but that was a special service. This letter was not addressed to any certain individual or church, but "to them that have obtained a like precious faith with us." The marginal reading informs us that the Greek means an equally precious faith. Their faith was as precious as was that of the Jews or the apostles. The vast majority of Christians then living had never seen the Lord, yet their faith was as precious as the faith of those who had seen him. It was precious because of the person in whom it was centered, and because of its uplifting power in their lives, and because it gave them hope of eternal bliss;

and also because it freed them from sin, and so making them righteous. The righteousness of God is the righteousness that comes from him—his plan of making men righteous. Our faith is in that, and not in the law of Moses or in any human scheme or philosophy; only God through our Lord Jesus Christ can make men righteous, by removing the guilt from those who obey him. "The knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord" does not mean what they know, but the knowledge that has been revealed about them, and that is in the gospel. It is in this sphere that grace and peace may be multiplied to us. There is no access to grace, and no avenue to peace, in any other way. It should be a powerful inducement for us to imbibe more and more of this knowledge. Certainly the mere fact that God has made known this gospel, has revealed this knowledge, will do no one any good unless he learns it himself and observes its requirements. A knowledge that you do not possess can be of no advantage to you. To take the Bible as your guide, and then not know what it says, is of no advantage.

"All Things That Pertain unto Life and Godliness" (Verse 3)

It seems that Peter used the term, "his divine power," in order to emphasize the fact that God's power alone, unmixed with any human ingenuity or philosophy, brought this great plan of human redemption into operation. In this plan of human redemption, brought into existence by God's power alone, he "hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." That is a broad statement. It has often been said that God has given to us all things that are essential to life and godliness; but Peter's statement is broader, for it covers all things that pertain to our salvation. You may have everything that is essential to a house, and yet not have everything that pertains to a house. You may have everything that is essential to an automobile, and still not have all things that pertain to an automobile, for a lot of trimmings—"gadgets"—may still be added; but when everything that pertains to a car is installed, nothing else can be added that will make it more comfortable or efficient. And so it is in the matter of our salvation; we not only have everything that is essential to salvation, but everything that in any way pertains to salvation. And it all comes through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and virtue; and this means that it comes to us through the revelation of his will, which is the gospel of Christ. Hence, in this knowledge of God, this gospel of Christ, we have everything that can contribute to the comfort or the efficiency of the plan of human redemption. And so, anything added is a hindrance.

"Partakers of the Divine Nature" (Verse 4)

In this knowledge of God which we have in the Bible God has "granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises." Through no other means has God made any promises to man. The promise of salvation from sin, God's promise of care for his children, and the promise of eternal inheritance are precious promises; and because they mean and include so much, they are exceeding great—nothing could be greater or more precious. These promises are great also because through them we are made partakers of the divine nature. And yet the mere fact that God has made these promises

does not make anyone better. If these promises were unconditional, if God had promised to bless all people regardless of character, such promises would make no man better. But they make people better, because to obtain them man must quit sin—must leave off deceit, dishonesty, and moral corruption, and live soberly, righteously, and godly. The call is, If you would inherit these promises, come up higher. Notice the following, disregarding the chapter division: "Even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. 6:16-18; 7:1.)

God's Formula for the Divine Nature (Verse 5-7)

After speaking of our becoming partakers of the divine nature, Peter added, "Yea, and for this very cause," that is, to accomplish this very end, namely, the partaking of the divine nature—"adding on your part . . ." Here is personal responsibility; the Christian has a part in this process of partaking of the divine nature. On his part he must add certain traits of character; the divine nature is manifested in certain characteristics—these the Christian must add. The sum total of the graces to be added constitutes this divine nature. These graces are not as rungs in a ladder, or as steps in a stairway, by means of which a person climbs into heaven. You do not leave each one behind as you add another, as you do in climbing a ladder. It is a process of accumulation; we take each with us as we add another. Peter gives us God's formula for compounding the divine nature, and not a ladder to climb. The church is the laboratory. When the chemist goes into his laboratory, and makes a compound according to a definite formula, the result is sure if he diligently follows the formula. And so it is in compounding the divine nature. If you are not as good as you would like to be, it is because you have not been diligent in following God's formula. But diligence is needed in this, as in all other worth-while accomplishments. Faith is the base—without it nothing can be added. Virtue must be supplied. With the Greeks virtue was manliness, the quality that enabled a man to stand firmly for whatever cause he espoused. What account is faith, if a person will not stand up for it and practice it, even in the face of bitter opposition? But this manliness, this courage, is not bluster or foolhardiness. It must be guided and modified by knowledge, and this the Christian must supply. It is the duty of every Christian to inform himself by a diligent study of the Bible. "Self-control." Here so many are lacking. Self-control prevents hysteria, fanaticism, overindulgence even in useful things, and abstaining from hurtful things; it is sensible living. Its development comes by earnest endeavor—mere wishing does not help. "Patience" is steadfastness; it is to remain true under any kind of adverse conditions. It is not that easygoing disposition that is sometimes called patience; some people get the name of being patient when they are merely indifferent to what is going on. Patience does not give up—it does not quit. People are too ready to quit when things do not go to suit them, or when the going is difficult. "Godliness." Thayer

thus defines the Greek word: "Reverence, respect; in the Bible everywhere piety toward God, godliness." Godliness, a proper regard for God and things divine, a feeling of dependence on him and a deep regard for his majesty and glory. We are lacking in reverence. Majesty and power are not ascribed to God, his name is spoken lightly, his word is used in jokes, the church is lightly spoken of, and the name of God and of Christ is profaned. "Brotherly kindness." The margin informs us that the Greek means love of the brethren. Genuine love manifests itself in different ways, depending on what the object of love needs. He may need food, clothing, or comfort and encouragement, or he may need teaching, or even rebuking. True love looks not so much to the present pleasure of the object loved, but to his ultimate good. "Love." This is love for all men. The greatest deed of love the Christian can do is to lead the sinner and the erring out of sin into the favor of God.

Abounding, or Lacking (Verses 8, 9)

The graces mentioned must be ours and abound, if we would be fruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; and this means that we would be fruitful in the gospel. Stress has just been placed on character, and verse 8 shows that, if that character is fully developed, we will do what we should do; we will not be idle. If a person lacks these graces he is nearsighted; he does not see far enough ahead to see what the results will be. The one who does not add the graces, but grows cold and indifferent, often imagines that he was not really in earnest, or did not know enough when he was baptized; he has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. If he becomes aroused, he frequently asks to be baptized again, "having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins."

An Exhortation and a Promise (Verses 10, 11)

Here again diligence is enjoined. Peter does not exhort the brethren to make their calling and election "as sure as ye can," but "give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure." "For if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble." If God's formula for the divine nature is diligently followed in compounding the elements that make up that character, the result is sure; "for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

SOME REFLECTIONS

Christian character is much greater than what the world calls culture; is much higher. It has the solid base of faith in God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore the genuine Christian is filled with reverence for God and all things that pertain to him. And because the church belongs to the Lord, the Christian will not speak lightly of it, nor do anything to injure it or to put it to shame; nor will he do any hurt to his fellow man. Christian culture excels all surface appearances and all efforts to make a big show by doing things. Goodness of heart will show itself in good deeds. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." (Prov. 4:23.) All acceptable obedience comes from a right attitude of the heart.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The Christian's need of courage.
 The Christian's need of knowledge.
 The need of piety and reverence.
 Love in action.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Verse 4

Repeat verse 4.
 Name some great promises.
 How do promises make us better?
 Give proof.

Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
 Give a discussion of character.
 Why is thinking necessary in developing a right character?
 Show how the church is related to the development of a right character.

Verses 5-7

Show that Peter speaks of an accumulation of traits and not of steps.
 In this formula for the divine nature, what is the base?
 Let the class, in turn, discuss each trait to be added.

Verses 1, 2

To whom did Peter write this letter?
 Why is faith in the Lord precious?
 Discuss verse 2.

Verses 8, 9

How be fruitful?
 What is the result of a good character?
 Repeat verses 8, 9.

Verse 3

Repeat verse 3.
 Discuss the difference between the words essential and pertain.
 Why can nothing more be added to the scheme of redemption?
 How are all these things made known to us?

Verses 10, 11

What does Peter exhort about their calling and election?
 What result does he mention?
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XII—June 20, 1943

JOHN DESCRIBES TRUE CHRISTIANS

1 John 2:1-6; 3:13-18; 4:15-17

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, Jesus 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.

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.

15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus 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.

GOLDEN TEXT—"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 15.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

June 14.	M	Abiding in Christ (1 John 2:1-11)
June 15.	T	Out of Death into Life (1 John 3:13-24)
June 16.	W	God Is Love (1 John 4:15-19)
June 17.	T	Sons of God (Rom. 8:12-17)
June 18.	F	Friends of Jesus (John 15:12-19)
June 19.	S	The Christian Citizen (Psalm 15)
June 20.	S	The Christian's Inner Life (Phil. 4:8-13)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—The time of writing the First Epistle of John is not known. Some have advanced the idea that it may have been written before the fall of Jerusalem; others, that it was written near the close of the first century.

Place.—Some suppose that it was written at Ephesus; others, that it was written on Patmos. There is no way of knowing the place of writing.

Persons.—The apostle John was the writer, but John addressed no certain person or group.

Lesson Links.—In addition to what has just been said as to the time, place, and persons of this epistle, the following interesting extract from Macknight's Preface to First John is given: "As we do not know the precise time when, so neither do we know, with any certainty, the place where, John wrote this first epistle. Grotius thought it was written on Patmos, during the apostle's exile there, which he places before the destruction of Jerusalem. But if it was written before that event, which I think is the truth, it is more reasonable to suppose that it was penned in Judea about the time the apostle observed the encompassing of Jerusalem with armies, and the other signs of its approaching destruction foretold by his master, which led him to conclude that the last hour of the Jewish state was come, and to write this letter, to prevent the Christians in Judea from being seduced by false christs and false teachers, who, according to our Lord's prediction, had arisen." In another paragraph Macknight says, "My opinion is, that John wrote his first epistle before the destruction of Jerusalem: (1) Because the expression, 'it is the last hour,' may more naturally be understood of the last hour of the duration of the Jewish state, than of any later period; especially since the apostle adds, and as you have heard that the antichrist cometh, so now there are many antichrists; whence we know that it is the last hour'; plainly alluding to our Lord's prediction concerning the false teachers who were to arise before the destruction of Jerusalem. (2) The expression, 'Ye have known him from the beginning,' applies better to the disciples, immediately before Jerusalem was destroyed, than to the few who may have been alive at the late date assigned to this epistle; for, thirty-five years after our Lord's ascension, when Jerusalem was destroyed, there may prove been many living who had seen and conversed with

him; whereas, in the year 98, or even in 92, there could not have been many alive who were of that description."

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Jesus Our Advocate and Propitiation for Our Sins (Verses 1, 2)

In verse 8 of chapter 1, John said, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." We sometimes sin ignorantly, sometimes we sin thoughtlessly, and sometimes we sin through the heat of passion; but that does not mean that we should give ourselves over to a life of sin. For that reason John now says, "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin." All that has been written by inspiration has this general object in view. Both the promises and the warnings stimulate in people a desire for better living, and the commands and examples show them how to live the better life. It is better to aim at perfection, though we miss it, than to have no high aim at all. If we are serving Jesus to the best of our ability, and yet commit sin, "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." He is our helper; he pleads our cause. He is the righteous one, the only one who ever lived among men entirely free from sin. "And he is the propitiation for our sins." We are told that the Greek word here translated propitiation, "is nowhere found in the New Testament but in this passage and in chapter 4:10. But it occurs often in the LXX translation of the Old Testament, where it signifies a sacrifice of atonement." Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice for us to make it possible for us to be saved; not only for the Christians who had lived or were living, but he made himself an offering for sin that all might be saved. All who will accept him may be saved.

On Knowing Him (Verses 3, 4)

The Lord says concerning all who are in the new covenant, "All shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them." (Heb. 8:11.) Paul said, "I know him whom I have believed." (2 Tim. 1:12.) "And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." The more earnest we are in our service to the Lord, the better we will know him. The prophet sets forth the idea in these words: "And let us know, let us follow on to know Jehovah." (Hos. 6:3.) Only by keeping his commandments can we know that we know him. Those who think they know him, and yet keep not his commandments, are badly mistaken. John puts it even stronger: "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." John makes no exceptions; he makes no excuses for anybody's failure to keep the Lord's commandments. If the man who says he knows God and keeps not his commandments is a liar, what about the man who says he knows him, and then teaches men that it is not necessary to keep his commandments? When people follow such teachers, it is a case of the blind leading the blind. The Bible outlaws such teachers.

The Love of God Perfected (Verses 5, 6)

John had said that the one who said he knew God, but kept not his commandments, was a liar. Now he states the opposite character,

or course of action: "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected." To do, and to teach men to do, the will of God makes one great in the kingdom. "The love of God." here refers to the love the Christian has for God; that is perfected in doing the will of God. Obedience to God not only perfects love, but it also is a test of our love. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." "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. He that loveth me not keepeth not my words." (John 14:21, 23, 24.) There is no love for the Lord in the heart of the one who does not keep his commandments. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." (1 John 5:3.) "Hereby"—because we love him—"we know that we are in him." Yet some who profess to know him decry the keeping of his commandments. How empty is such a profession. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked." And Jesus walked in perfect obedience to his Father's will. "For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (John 6:38.) "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work," (John 4:34.) Hence at the close of his earth life he could say, "I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do." (John 17:4.) If therefore we claim to abide in him, we should walk as he walked.

Love or Hate—Which? (1 John 3:13-15)

People generally do not like to be disturbed in any course which they have chosen to follow, or in any way of living into which they have aimlessly drifted through force of circumstances; they do not like to be disturbed in their habits of life. Christianity is a disturbing factor; if it were not so, it would do no good—it would work no changes in thoughts and actions. The very nature and purpose of the gospel makes its advocates antagonistic to evil habits and customs. Many people resent this to the extent of persecuting the Christian. This is no cause for astonishment to the Christian who thinks of the nature of things. "Marvel not, brethren, if the world hateth you." You disturb them, and they resent it. Jesus said to his own brothers who did not then believe on him, "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that its works are evil." (John 7:7.) "A servant is not greater than his lord. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you." (John 15:20.) They hated and persecuted him who came to bless and to save, and for his name's sake they will hate and persecute his followers. People give various reasons for claiming to have passed from death into life. John gives love of the brethren as evidence; yet it does not seem that he meant that love of the brethren is the only evidence one has, or should have. But the absence of love is proof that one has not passed from death into life. "He that loveth not abideth in death." The love here enjoined is not the affection that one has for a close personal friend, or that members of a family have for one another; that love is expressed in the Greek by an entirely different word. The love here enjoined has to do with duty and obligation; it can be exercised at will, and can be exercised toward all men, even toward those whose ways and habits are evil and even hateful. To dislike a person because of his ways is not to hate him. "Whosoever hateth his

brother is a murderer." The word hate is not always used in as strong a sense as here. (Examples: Luke 14:26; John 12:25.) To hate one to the extent of wishing him dead is to be a murderer at heart. Certainly nothing of God or of Christ dwells in a heart of that sort—"no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

The Proof of Love (Verses 16-18)

Jesus gave the highest proof of love—"he laid down his life for us." He died for his enemies—even for those who clamored for his blood. "But God commandeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8.) "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Jesus loved us even unto death on the cross. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:12, 13.) A practical way to show our love is to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and to help in all other ways where help is needed. If one does not do the needed thing, when it is possible for him to do so, the love Of God does not dwell in him. Verse 18 is a figure of speech frequently used in the New Testament, in which a less important thing is denied in order to emphasize some of more importance. Certainly the Lord does not prohibit our speaking kind words, even words expressive of love; but he does demand that we do not love in words only, but in deed—do that which shows real true love. Love that spends itself in words when real help is needed, is not real love. Well-chosen words of comfort may help the sorrowing, but words will not satisfy hunger, nor clothe the naked.

Confessing That Jesus Is the Son of God (1 John 4:15-17)

Verse 14 says, "And we have beheld and bear witness that the Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." But even so, there is something for us to do. To confess that Jesus is the Son of God implies much more than the use of words; it is an acknowledgment of our faith in him in all that he is, and a pledge to him of our loyalty and service. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21.) "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46.) Again John emphasizes love. "God is love." So he is; but that is not all he is, "for our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. 12:29.) Let us not form a one-sided judgment; while thinking of God as a God of love, we must also remember that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Heb. 10:31.) "For it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord." (Rom. 12:19.) There are some things that God hates. (Prov. 6:16-19; Rev. 2:6.) While God so loved the world that he gave his own Son to redeem the world, he so hates sin and rebellion that he will render vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thess. 1:7-9.) Let no man therefore think he can escape if he seeks to turn the love of God into lasciviousness. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." (Gal. 6:7.) God does not dwell in one who loves neither God nor man; if we love God and man, God abideth in us, and we in him. And that will give us confidence in the day of judgment.

SOME REFLECTIONS

When the apostle John was a young man, he was ambitious of worldly honor. He thought Jesus would establish a kingdom similar to other kingdoms. He and James wanted places of honor next to the king in that kingdom. (Mark 10:35-37.) Perhaps the memory of this worldly ambition caused John in his late years to see the need of special caution against such love. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." (1 John 2:15.)

In his younger days John was also of a fiery temper. When a certain Samaritan village refused to receive Jesus, James and John became so enraged that they said, "Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven, and consume them?" (Luke 9:54.) The religion of his master had a wonderful mellowing influence on the character of John. It taught him that love was far better than vengeance.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The influence of Christianity in molding character.
 What we should love and what we should not love.
 The evils of worldly ambition.
 Discuss I John 3:18.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

Verses 1, 2

What did John say about the man who says he has no sin?
 Why did John say he wrote?
 Why should we have a high ideal?
 For whom did Jesus give himself as a sacrifice for sin?

Verses 3, 4

What does John say about knowing the Lord?
 On this point, what other passages can you call to mind?
 Who does John say is a liar?

Verses 5, 6

What is said of those who keep God's word?

What did Jesus say on this point?
 How may we know we are in him?
 What did Jesus say of his attitude toward God's will?

I John 3:13-15

Why is Christianity a disturbing factor?
 Why do some sinners resent the preaching of the gospel?
 How may we know we have passed from death unto life?
 What of the brother who hated his brother?
 What sort of hate makes a man a murderer at heart?

Verses 16-18

How did God show his love?
 In what ways may we show our love?

1 John 4:15-17

Discuss the verses of this section of our lesson.
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XIII—June 27, 1943

JOHN'S COUNSEL TO CHRISTIANS

2 John 4-11; 3 John 5-12

4 I rejoice greatly that I have found certain of thy children walking in truth, even as we received commandment from the Father.

5 And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote to thee a new commandment, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

6 And this is love, that we should walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, even as ye heard from the beginning, that ye should walk in it.

7 For many deceivers are gone forth into the world, even they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the anti-christ.

8 Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which we have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward.

9 Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son.

10 If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting:

11 For he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works.

5 Beloved, thou doest a faithful work in whatsoever thou doest toward them that are brethren and strangers withal;

6 Who bare witness to thy love before the church: whom thou wilt do well to set forward on their journey worthily of God:

7 Because that for the sake of the Name they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.

8 We therefore ought to welcome such, that we may be fellow-workers for the truth.

9 I wrote somewhat unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

10 Therefore, if I come, I will bring to remembrance his works which he doeth, prating against us with wicked words: and not content therewith. neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and them that would he forbiddeth and casteth them out of the church.

11 Beloved, imitate not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

12 Demetrius hath the witness of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, we also hear witness; and thou knowest that our witness is true.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." (3 John 2.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 20:28-35.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

June 21. M	Observing the Commandments (2 John 4-11)
June 22. T	Walking in Truth (3 John 1-12)
June 23. W	Jesus Counsels Love (Matt. 5:38-48)
June 24. T	Counsel to Godliness (1 Tim. 6:6-12)
June 25. F	Building a Life (1 Cor. 3:10-17)
June 26. S	Building for Eternity (Jude 17-26)
June 27. S	Longing for God's Commandments (Psalm 119:129-136)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—The dates of writing these two letters cannot be determined.

Place.—The place of writing is uncertain, though it was most likely Ephesus.

Persons.—John, the elect lady, and Gains.

Lesson Links.—The sister to whom John addressed his second letter must have been a woman of strong character and of outstanding virtues. She also had a Christian sister, some of whose children were with John when he wrote her this letter, for they sent their salutations. (Last verse.) This letter is addressed to this good woman and her children. "Whom" is plural in the Greek, and includes the good woman and her children; "whom I love in truth; and not I only, but also all they that know the truth." She and her children were so devoted to the service of the Lord that all Christians who knew them loved them. They loved them for the truth's sake. Third John was addressed to Gaius the beloved—"whom I love in truth." It is likely that this is the only place this Gaius is mentioned; no commentary has been able to connect him with any other Gains mentioned. He was evidently a most faithful and generous Christian. His entertaining and helping those who were going

about preaching the gospel to unbelievers shows that he had some property, and was generous in the use of his means. A man who does that is worthy of prosperity. Hence John said, "Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." This does not necessarily mean that Gaius was not prosperous, nor that his health was not good. We can pray that a man be prosperous and in good health, even though he has both prosperity and health. "Even as thy soul prospereth." That shows that he was gaining in richness of character. The fourth verse indicates that this Gains was one of John's converts to the Lord. John was rejoiced that he had developed into such a worth-while Christian. In both First and Second John, John merely identifies himself as "the elder," which shows that he was an aged man when he wrote both letters. It does not necessarily imply that he was an elder in some congregation. In a general sense the apostles did the service of elders in all the churches. Paul speaks of having the care of all the churches.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

An Occasion for Rejoicing (Verse 4)

John's language does not imply that only some of the elect lady's children were walking in the truth; it only implies that those of her children whom John knew were walking in the truth. Of those whom he did not know he could affirm nothing. The language seems to imply that some of her children had been in the city where John was, and he had found that they were faithful to the Lord. For the apostle John to so speak of her children would be a source of great comfort to the good mother. To walk in the truth is to walk in that course of life which the truth prescribes. Any godly man rejoices when he finds others walking in the truth. John leaves no one in doubt as to what he means by the word truth—"even as we received commandment from the Father." This limits the Christian's walk to the things God has commanded. It is true that Zacharias and Elisabeth lived under the law of Moses, but it is said of them, "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." (Luke 1:6.) Paul states that this obedience to God's commands is now, under the gospel, more binding than under the law. (Heb. 2:2-4; 10:26-29.) Our warfare against sin is for the purpose of "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; and being in readiness to avenge all disobedience, when your obedience shall be made full." (2 Cor. 10:5, 6.)

To Love Is to Walk in God's Commandments (Verses 5, 6)

"I beseech thee, lady." To beseech is to beg, to ask, to pray; it shows a strong personal interest in the matter, and is frequently more effective than a command, and may be as binding. John was not bringing forward some new duty, "but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another." "The beginning" does not here refer to the beginning of the world, but to the beginning of the gospel, the beginning of the scheme of redemption. "And this is love, that we should walk after his commandments." The best proof that we really love the children of God is that "we love God and do his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John

5:2, 3.) Where there is no love for God and the children of God, there is no real Christian love for anybody or for anything. Genuine love for God brings one's whole life into proper relationship with all things else; for if a person loves God, he will love all things that pertain to God's plans, and oppose—even hate—all things opposed to God. It is folly to talk about loving God while walking in disobedience to him, or preaching to others that it is not necessary to obey the commandments of God. There is no such thing as disobedient love, nor indifferent love. Love never speaks against the commandments of God. "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my word." (John 14:23.)

The Antichrist (Verses 7, 8)

"Many deceivers are gone forth into the world"—men professing to be followers of Christ, but were real enemies to the cause of the Lord. In an early day there were mystics who contended that Christ did not really come in the flesh, but it was only an appearance, not a reality. He was not really crucified, but only seemed to be. Probably John had special reference to the leader of this group when he said, "This is the deceiver and the anti-christ." In his first letter (4:1-3) he has this to say of this group, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the anti-christ, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already." Because real prophets were inspired, these false prophets had also to claim inspiration—claimed to be guided by the Spirit of God. Hence John's admonition: "Prove the spirits." Give them a thorough testing. If they denied that Jesus came in the flesh, they were false prophets—antichrists. And so John admonishes this good woman and her children to be on guard, lest they lose the faith and hope which the apostles had planted in them—"but that ye receive a full reward." The language shows clearly that they would lose the reward if they allowed themselves to be led away by these false teachers.

How to Treat These False Teachers (Verses 9-11)

It seems that the good woman to whom John wrote was a widow, for he recognized her as the head of the house. She was of a generous disposition, willing to help a gospel preacher. A devoted Christian woman, desirous of doing good, would be more liable to be imposed upon than a person who was not interested in helping others. She needed to be able to identify false teachers, and to be warned against them. As another mark of the false teachers, John gives this: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God." The teaching of Christ has a prescribed limit. If he did not teach a thing, it certainly cannot be called his teaching. To go beyond the teaching presented in the New Testament is to fail to abide in the teaching of Christ. The faithful teacher stays within the limit of his teaching. The man who professes to be a teacher of the gospel of Christ, and yet teaches things not found in the New Testament, assumes that the gospel as revealed is not complete. John proceeds to tell who is worthy: "He that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son."

And so the false teacher and the true teacher are identified. What, then, should this good woman and her children do when one of these false teachers came along? "Receive him not into your house." Do not entertain him in your home; for her to do so would help him along in his perverse teaching, and make her a party to it. To help a false teacher in his work is to help him deceive others. It would be especially necessary for a Christian woman not to entertain in her home questionable characters. She must not so much as give such a man Christian greetings—must not wish him well in his work. But this does not mean that Christians are permitted to persecute false teachers. Certainly we should oppose such and even expose them, if need be.

Gaius Commended for Helping Gospel Teachers (3 John 5-8)

"Beloved, thou doest a faithful work"—the work of a faithful Christian. Words of commendation, when they are deserved, are both proper and profitable. The strangers here mentioned were Christians with whom Gaius had no personal acquaintance; they were men who had gone out preaching the gospel. They must have gone out from the church where John lived, and that was likely Ephesus; for they reported to the church how Gaius had helped them in their work. The next clause indicates that these same men were going out on another preaching tour, and would again visit the church where Gaius was a member—"whom thou wilt do well to set forward on their journey worthily of God." To set them forward on their journey would be to furnish them expense money. Compare

similar expressions in Acts 15:3 and Titus 3:13. John was therefore exhorting Gaius to help these brethren in their travels; "because that for the sake of the Name they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles." They had received no help from people who were not Christians. In helping these brethren on their way, Gaius was not making as much sacrifice as they. "We therefore ought to welcome such, that we may be fellow-workers for the truth." Do not receive and help such men grudgingly, but welcome them as giving you an opportunity to be a fellow worker for the truth. People too often fail to realize that helping the gospel preacher to preach the gospel is as important as it is to do the actual preaching. Both the preacher and those who sustain him in his preaching are fellow workers— all are engaged in the work of preaching the gospel. The preacher is merely the mouthpiece for all who are helping him in his work.

Diotrephes (Verses 9, 10)

Evidently Diotrephes had some position in the church that gave him excuse to think he had full authority over all the affairs of the church. It is likely that he was an elder of the church, and dominated all the others. Naturally any letter written to that church would first fall into the hands of the elders. It seems that a note John had written to the church fell into the hands of Diotrephes, and he refused to let it be read to the church. Diotrephes loved to have the pre-eminence; he wanted to appear big and important, which is proof of a very small man. He had been prating against John with wicked words. Of course he had a following in the church, or he could not have made any headway with his highhanded methods. Just what John meant to do to him when he made his contemplated visit, he does not say. It is possible that he was an extreme Judaizing teacher, such as persecuted Paul. He would not allow any that were not

of his sort to come into his home; if any members received such, he turned them out of the church.

Demetrius (Verses 11, 12)

Gaius was exhorted not to imitate such men as Diotrephes—"imitate not that which is evil." Nothing of an evil nature should be the pattern for a Christian, "but that which is good." There are two courses that anyone may follow he can do that which is good, or he can do that which is evil. "He that doeth good is of God: he that doeth evil hath not seen God." And herein was a marked contrast between Diotrephes and Demetrius. Demetrius did that which was good; Diotrephes, that which was evil. All that knew Demetrius bore witness to his worth as a Christian. John also gave his testimony in favor of Demetrius; "and thou knowest that our witness is true." John was not using empty words of flattery; good men do not indulge in flattery.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Certain incidents, or traits, or deeds have given certain ones places in history. Some are noted for the real service they have rendered for man's good; some, for the evil they have done. The characters in this present lesson are examples.

The conduct of some people is a puzzle to any thoughtful person. How a man can profess to be a Christian, and deceive himself into thinking that he is one, and yet manifest a spirit directly opposed to the spirit and teaching of Christianity, is a mystery. Take Diotrephes as an example. He would sell his soul for the satisfaction of being the big boss in a church of the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet he likely thought himself to be the most substantial Christian in that church.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

What a Christian woman can do.
The hardships of the early preachers.
The spirit of Diotrephes today.
How we can help to spread the gospel.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

What does he caution against?
Discuss any other interesting point in these verses.

Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
Give some facts about the woman to whom John sent his second letter.
Give some facts about the man to whom the third letter was sent.
For what blessings did John pray for Gaius?

Verses 9-11

What advice did John give concerning these false teachers?
Why is it that a generous heart is most likely to be imposed upon?
Discuss verse 9.

Verse 4

What is it to walk in the truth?
What is said of Zacharias and Elisabeth?
To what extent are we to war against sin?

3 John 5-8

What commendable thing had Gaius done?
How may anyone be a fellow worker for the truth?

Verses 5, 6

Discuss the difference between "beseech" and "command."
What is Christian love?
How does it regulate our attitude toward God and man?

Verses 9, 10

Give a discussion of Diotrephes and his methods.

Verses 7, 8

What character is antichrist?

Verses 11, 12

Discuss verses 11, 12.
Discuss the reflections.

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THIRD QUARTER
GOD IN THE MAKING OF A NATION: ERA OF MOSES

AIM: To help the student to find and appreciate God's part in the making of a nation in the days of Moses and today.

Lesson I—July 4, 1943

A PEOPLE IN DISTRESS

Ex. 1:6-14; 2:23-25

6 And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.

7 And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

8 Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph.

9 And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we:

10 Come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they also join themselves unto our enemies, and fight against us, and get them up out of the land.

11 Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pitham and Raamses.

12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel.

13 And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor:

14 And they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field, all their service, wherein they made them serve with rigor.

23 And it came to pass in the course of those many days, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.

24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

25 And God saw the children of Israel, and God took knowledge of them.

GOLDEN TEXT—"They cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage." (Ex. 2:23.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 61.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

June 28.	M	An Oppressed People (Ex. 1:6-14)
June 29.	T	A Cry of Distress (Psalm 102:1-15)
June 30.	W	A Prayer in Affliction (Psalm 142:1-7)
July 1.	T	God Hears a People's Cry (Ex. 2:23-25)
July 2.	F	The Bondage of Sin (Rom. 6:15-23)
July 3.	S	Trust in the Lord (Isa. 26:1-12)
July 4.	S	The Lord Delivers (Psalm 107:1-9)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—According to Usher, Joseph's death occurred 1635 B.C.; according to Hales, 1792 B.C. The children of Israel were reduced to severe bondage under a new king, a new dynasty, about sixty years after Joseph's death. The second part of our lesson occurred more than eighty years after the beginning of this severe bondage. This is evident from the fact that Moses was born sometime after this bondage became so severe, and that he was eighty years of age when he was called to lead Israel out of bondage.

Place.—Egypt. To learn as much as possible about Egypt, the student should consult Bible dictionaries, histories, and encyclopedias.

Persons.—The king of Egypt, his slave drivers, and the children of Israel.

Lesson Links.—So far as it appears on the surface, the making of the nation of Israel began when Jehovah called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees and promised to make of him a great nation. (Gen. 12:1-3.) This promise was renewed to Abraham when he offered up Isaac. (Gen. 22:15-18.) This same promise was made to Abraham's son Isaac, and to Isaac's son Jacob. (Gen. 26:1-5; 23:13-16.) Jacob became the father of twelve sons, from whom came the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph, the first-born of Jacob's favorite wife Rachel, was Jacob's favorite son. This favoritism on the part of the father so embittered Jacob's other sons that they determined to get rid of Joseph. They sold him as a slave into Egypt, where he, after much bitter experience, became next to Pharaoh in authority. These various experiences are recorded in chapters 37, 39, 40, 41 of Genesis. Joseph became food administrator, with all authority necessary to carry out his plans. How Jacob and all his family came to be in Egypt and how they were all royally treated till a change in government is told in the remaining part of Genesis. Also the deaths of Jacob and Joseph are recorded. It is not likely that there was ever a greater funeral procession than that which followed the body of Jacob to the place of burial in Palestine. The history of all these matters, from the call of Abraham to the deliverance of Israel from bondage, is as fascinating as any fiction ever written. In this history we see romance and tragedy strangely interwoven.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Hebrews Multiply Rapidly (Verses 6, 7)

In verses 1-4 Moses again gives the names of Jacob's sons who came with him into Egypt. Joseph is not included in this list, because he was in Egypt when Jacob went down into Egypt. Joseph and all who went down into Egypt with Jacob, and perhaps all the Egyptians who knew them, had died before the Hebrews were reduced to such abject slavery. In the meantime the children of Israel had multiplied exceedingly. The singular way in which Moses describes their increase shows that, under the providence of God, they multiplied more rapidly than any other people. It seems that they must have doubled in numbers every fourteen or fourteen and a half years.

The Children of Israel in Bondage (Verses 8-11)

"Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph." Whether this was a king in the regular succession of kings or a king in a new dynasty is not certain. Former kings had been favorable to the children of Israel on account of the service Joseph had rendered, but that was all now forgotten or ignored for political strategy. The Hebrews were becoming so numerous that this new king feared them. He would persuade his people that the Hebrews were a menace to the nation. It sounds like some modern talk. He proposed to deal wisely with these people, but did he? He feared that, in case of war, the Hebrews would join their enemies, and succeed in getting out of the country. He wanted to keep them in the land.

If fear of them had been all that was in his mind, he could have sent them out of the country, for they were foreigners; they had no citizenship rights. He wanted them as slaves of the government, and the use he made of them shows that he had in mind an extensive public-works program. It is likely that he stated his fears about their joining an enemy so as to justify himself in the eyes of his people for what he was about to do. But it seems that he, like most absolute rulers or dictators, failed to understand human nature; for his reducing them to such grinding slavery would make them more likely to want to get out of his country. And herein Jehovah was using the folly of men to carry out his purposes. Had the children of Israel continued to be favored by the Egyptian government, as they had been under the kings that knew Joseph and appreciated the great service he had rendered, they would have wanted to remain in Egypt; but they had to be made willing to leave that land when the proper time came. Nothing would accomplish that end more effectively than hard, grinding slavery, in which children were to be destroyed like surplus pigs or calves. In all this cruelty the king thought he was dealing wisely with the Hebrews. To increase his profits and to thoroughly subdue the people of Israel, the king set taskmasters over them. He could not then know that he was putting his plans and purposes against the plans and purposes of the God of heaven and earth. And yet it is possible that he had from tradition a vague idea concerning the promise God made to Jacob at Beer-sheba, as Jacob journeyed to Egypt: "I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again." (Gen. 46:1-4.) All the planning and scheming the king could do would not alter the working out of God's plans. As cruel as was his treatment of the Hebrews, he could not destroy them, nor hinder their increase. He was allowed to use them, and even to abuse them, but he could not control their destiny; that was in God's hands. The king made some public improvements with this slave labor. "And they built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Raamses." It does not seem that any of these slaves were owned by individuals; they were owned and controlled by the government.

The Children of Israel Multiply More Rapidly (Verse 12)

"But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad." These Hebrews puzzled the king and his official family. The king wanted to use them, but he did not want them to become so numerous as to be able to take over the whole country. They might get out of control. He thought that excessive labor would reduce their birth rate; but that plan did not work out as he expected. The facts among all races and nations contradict the notion that labor decreases the birth rate; the birth rate among laborers is higher than it is among the idle, or even among those whose work requires little physical effort. People who do little, or no, physical labor become soft and flabby, and suffer a loss of vitality. The idle indulge more in dissipation and general fleshly indulgence than the hard worker, and that also lowers the birth rate. The king's plan was therefore bound to fail; it had the opposite effect from what he expected. Besides the natural results of the king's plan, God was looking after the growth of that race of

people; nothing that the king could do would greatly interfere with the working out of God's plans concerning them. When a man, even a great king, fights against God, he is bound to fail. Pharaoh and his helpers were grieved that their plans had so far failed of expected results. It is likely that the king thought his plan would lessen the increase of the Hebrews in two ways; namely, decrease the birth rate, and increase the mortality by excessive labor. He was determined to make his plan succeed for two reasons—he wanted to prevent the rapid multiplying of the Hebrews, and also he did not want to be humiliated before his people by a failure.

The King Made Their Service Harder (Verses 13, 14)

Pharaoh was as cruel as he was determined; but what he thought was his wisdom was his folly. He kept heaping such burdens on the Hebrews that he made their lives bitter with hard service. Negro slavery was never so harsh as that endured by the Hebrews. Such treatment of innocent people is unbelievably cruel in these times; but to judge fairly the king and his people, we must judge according to the standards of that time. High standards of right did not prevail in other countries. No civil government now, unless ruled by a barbaric monster, would do as the Egyptians did. In this country the worst criminals in prisons are treated with more consideration. But the service required of these children of Israel was not altogether an evil to them; for they learned many kinds of work—work in mortar and brick, and all kinds of service in the field. They learned construction and farming; they formerly had been stockmen.

The Historic Connections (Ex. 1:15 to 2:23)

It is important that we keep up the historic connections between the two parts of our lesson. When it became clear to Pharaoh that his first plan to keep the Hebrews from multiplying so rapidly had failed, he resorted to even worse cruelty. He commanded the Hebrew midwives to kill every male child born to the Hebrews. "But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them." When this scheme failed, "Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive." It is likely that very few sons escaped, for among the Egyptians would be found some who would be more diligent in carrying out the king's orders than the midwives had been. It was a more wholesale slaughter of infants than that ordered by Herod. During this time, "Moses was born, and was exceeding fair; and he was nourished three months in his father's house: and when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son." (Acts 7:20, 21.) Moses therefore had all the educational advantages that the times afforded; "and he was mighty in his words and works." (Acts 7:22.) But when he went out to visit his brethren, he slew an Egyptian who was imposing on a Hebrew; he then fled to Midian. At this time he was about forty years old.

God Heard the Cries of the Hebrews (Ex. 2:23-25)

After the children of Israel had suffered the king's cruelties for many days, the king died. These days of cruelties lasted for more than eighty years, and more than one king may have died during

that time; but there is no indication that the lot of the children became any easier, but rather worse. But the more oppressive their slavery became, the more willing they would be to leave Egypt when the time of their deliverance came; that time was drawing nigh. Two things had to be accomplished before the exodus; namely, they had to become sufficiently numerous to possess the land of Canaan, and they had to become willing to leave Egypt. Jehovah had not forsaken them. He heard their sighing and crying. It is not that God had forgotten his covenant with Abraham. He speaks to man in man's language. The time had been so long that it would seem to man that he had really forgotten his covenant. Man forgets that God does not get in a hurry as we do; we forget that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. In his own way and in his own time he works out his plans, though it may seem to man that he has forgotten. The children of Israel were now ready for their deliverance, and God began to show his hand in their affairs. Things would now move rapidly to a climax. When the time comes for God to act, he finishes his work and cuts it short. "For the Lord will execute his word upon the earth, finishing it and cutting it short." (Rom. 9:28.)

SOME REFLECTIONS

Egypt was the nursery in which the Hebrew people grew to be a strong nation. There they lived and thrived in peace for many years, being protected from wars by the Egyptian government. Even their slavery was not an unmixed evil, for in it they learned other things besides stock raising.

It has been said that God works in mysterious ways his wonders to perform. This is true with reference to the working out of his great plans. To the Egyptians, and perhaps to most of the Hebrews, there was no indication that God's hand was in their affairs. The king thought he was managing things in his own way, and the Hebrews could see nothing in the whole affair to indicate that a benevolent God was having anything to do with what was going on. The way Moses was saved from being killed had nothing about it to show to the people that God was taking care of that helpless babe. It seems that in some way his parents had a revelation from God as to what to do; for the writer to the Hebrews says, "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw he was a goodly child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment." (Heb. 11:23.)

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The birth and training of Moses.
Moses leaves the royal family. (Heb. 11:24-26.)
His rashness and flight to Midian.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
Give an outline of the development of the Hebrew nation.

Verses 6, 7

Give the names of Jacob's sons.
How is their increase in numbers described?

Verses 8-11

Tell about the change in the condition of the children of Israel.

How did the king use them?
 Why was his move not wise?
 Why was he bound to fail?

The Historic Connections

Give an outline of matters in the verses between the two sections of our lesson, giving special attention to what is said about Moses.

Verse 12

Why were the king and his officers grieved?
 Discuss verse 12.

Ex. 2:23-25

Discuss verses 23-25.
 Discuss the reflections.

Verses 13, 14

Discuss verses 13, 14.

Lesson II—July 11, 1943

GOD CALLS A LEADER

Ex. 3:1-12

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GOLDEN TEXT—"Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt." (Ex. 3:10.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 106: 1-5.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

July 5.	M	Moses and ^{the} Ark of Bulrushes (Ex. 2:1-10)
July 6.	T	God Calls Moses (Ex. 3:1-12)
July 7.	W	Moses Heeds God's Call (Heb. 11:23-27)
July 8.	T	God Calls Joshua (Josh. 1:1-9)
July 9.	F	God Calls Gideon (Judges 6:11-24)
July 10.	S	God Calls Paul (Acts 9:10-20)
July 11.	S	The Messianic King (Psalm 72: ?-17)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—According to Usher, 1491 B.C.; according to Hales, 1648. Moses was forty years old when he fled to Midian. (Acts 7:23.) The Hebrews had been heartlessly oppressed for some time when Moses was born, for Pharaoh had tried two schemes to prevent their rapid increase before he gave the command to his people to kill all the male children born to the Hebrews. Moses remained in Midian forty years. (Acts 7:30.)

Place.—Mount Horeb, in the land of Midian. According to some authorities, Horeb is the name of a particular peak in a group of peaks called Sinai; others claim that Sinai is the name of a peak, and Horeb the name of the group of peaks. More likely the names are interchangeable. This group of mountains is almost in the center of the peninsula that lies between the two horns of the Red Sea.

Persons.—Jehovah, Moses, and Jethro. Moses was the son of Amram and Jochebed, descendants of Levi. (Ex. 6:16-20.) Jethro was also called Reuel. (Ex. 2:16-21.) From what Jethro later said to Moses, it seems that the knowledge of Jehovah had been kept alive in Midian. (Ex. 18:1-12.)

Lesson Links.—Moses was born during the time Pharaoh's command to his people to kill all male children born to the Hebrews was in force. When the mother saw "that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch; and she put the child therein, and laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him." Jehovah was also watching over that babe. It was therefore by no mere chance that the babe was placed where Pharaoh's daughter found him. When Pharaoh's daughter saw the helpless, and seemingly abandoned, child, "she had compassion on him." She knew he was a Hebrew child. Through the intervention of Miriam, the child's mother was hired as a nurse, a mother paid by royalty to care for her own child! At the proper time the mother took the child to Pharaoh's daughter, "and he became her son." He therefore had all the advantages that royalty could give. (Read Ex. 2:1-10.) This was a part of the process in preparing him to be a leader; but his rashness in slaying an Egyptian showed that he needed some additional training which he could not receive in the royal family. That additional training he would receive as a shepherd in the land of Midian. Here he would learn to be patient and persevering, and he would learn how to deal with foolish things. He would need all this as leader of the children of Israel.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON**Moses as Shepherd (Verse 1)**

In the land of Midian Moses found a home and employment with the priest of Midian. "Now Moses was keeping the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian." In the royal family in Egypt Moses had every luxury that Egypt could afford, and he also had as his associates the most prominent people in the kingdom. To give up all that for the hardships, the loneliness, and obscurity of a lowly shepherd's life would seem to the worldly-wise as the acme of folly. God's hand was in it all. Many needed lessons, real

essential lessons, cannot be learned in schools and books; nor can they be learned in luxurious surroundings. These lessons can be learned only by hard experience; and some things about one's self can best be learned in solitude, and in quiet meditation. In the whirl of society, and even in intense action in doing necessary things, a person has no time to get acquainted with himself or the Lord. As a shepherd Moses had time to meditate, to get acquainted with himself, and to learn his own deficiencies, and to build against them. Had he not needed such training—such experience, the Lord would not have led him through it. Another thing was favorable to this needed training—Midian was off the beaten track, and had little connection with the rest of the world. Moses had identified himself with the people of Midian by marrying the daughter of the priest of the land. To this union two sons were born. (Ex. 2:21, 22; 18:2-6; Acts 7:29.) It is not likely that Moses enjoyed so much happiness at any other period of his life as he did while in the land of Midian. In his search for pasturage he led the flocks to the back side of the wilderness, to the mount of God. It is not likely that the mount was so called at that time; but was later so called because God gave the law from that mountain.

The Burning Bush (Verses 2, 3)

From Stephen's speech we learn some important dates in the life of Moses. He was forty years old when he fled from Egypt to Midian; forty years later he was called to go back into Egypt. (Acts 7:23, 30.) Concerning the incident of the burning bush, Stephen said, "And when forty years were fulfilled, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush." Had Moses known all these forty years that God intended to use him to lead the children of Israel out of bondage, would he not have become restless and wondered why the Lord was so slow about it? But Moses needed to get over the headiness that prompted him to slay the Egyptian, supposing that he was then able to lead the people out of Egypt. It took long years of shepherding to make him humble and meek. But the time had come. To make his call impressive, there appeared a strange sight, there was a flame of fire in a bush, and yet the bush was not burned. That naturally excited the curiosity of Moses; "and Moses said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt."

God Calls from the Burning Bush (Verses 4-6)

It was an angel who appeared to Moses in the burning bush. (Verse 2; Acts 7:30.) Here God is represented as doing the talking, because this angel, this messenger, was delivering God's message to Moses. So far as the record shows, this is the first time God had spoken directly and audibly to anyone since he spoke to Jacob at Beer-sheba, as he journeyed to Egypt. (Gen. 46:1-4.) But when Jehovah saw that Moses turned aside to approach the burning bush, he said, "Draw not nigh hither." It was no time to be prying into things through curiosity. The Divine Presence made the ground holy. Why Moses was required to remove his shoes on holy ground is not clear, but it would impress Moses that it was no ordinary occasion. It is singular that God identified himself to Moses as he did. To us it would seem that to say, "I am God," would be sufficient; but it was different in that age, when every nation or race of people was thought

to have its own god or gods. It cannot be that Moses had a very clear idea as to God. Hence God said to him, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." To Jacob as he fled to Padan-aram, God said, "I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac." (Gen 28:13.) Notice the present tense of the verb—"I am," not, "I was." He was still the God of these fathers. Jesus used this tense of the verb as an argument against the Sadducees who were trying to prove that there could be no resurrection of the dead. Jesus quoted the statement here made to Moses, and added, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Hence there was, and is yet, a sense in which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were living when God made that statement to Moses, and when Jesus used it as an argument against the Sadducees. As their bodies were buried, it is certain that their spirits were and are yet living. (See Matt. 22:23-32.) Jesus put that forth as a proof that there would be a resurrection, and his argument silenced the Sadducees. But Jehovah spoke the words to Moses to let him know that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God who promised good to their descendants, was still mindful of them and his promises. He would have Moses know that he had not forsaken them. But the stoutest heart fears in the presence of a heavenly visitor. "And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God." Stephen says, "And Moses trembled, and durst not behold." (Acts 7:32.) It is not to the discredit of Moses that he feared and trembled. John had been intimately associated with Jesus in the flesh; yet when Jesus appeared to him in a glorified state, he fell at his feet as one dead. (Rev. 1:12-18.) A humble servant of God is bound to feel little and helpless in the presence of a heavenly being.

Israel's Time of Deliverance Had Come (Verses 7-9)

It is not likely that the great mass of Hebrews in Egypt had much information about God. They had now been in grinding slavery for more than eighty years. Very few, if any, were living, who were born before they were reduced to such slavery. If any had some knowledge of God, it would seem to them that Jehovah had forgotten them, or was unmindful of their distress. But God does not forget—he was hearing their cries and groanings. He had bided his own time. In these verses God adapts himself to man's way of thinking and talking. He knew all along that his people were in slavery; but God does not hear the cries of the proud and the self-sufficient. God hears—gives heed—only to those who hear him. As the bondage had become unbearable, the Hebrews would now hear his call, and would be willing to be led out of Egypt. God is ready and willing to lead people when they reach the point where they want to be led; he will deliver those who want to be delivered. The Hebrews had reached that point; God's time had come. He was ready to lead them out of terrible slavery into a good land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Milk and honey symbolized the good things they would have in that country. That would appeal powerfully to a class of hard-working, scantily-fed slaves. This land was already inhabited by a number of races of people; and, for the most part, they were warlike people.

Moses Called to Be Leader (Verses 10-12)

Nothing else on record is anything like the career of Moses; he was forty years in the royal family of Egypt, forty years a shepherd in Midian, and forty years as the leader of Israel. It seems that in Midian he had settled down contentedly to the life of a shepherd, yet no one knows the workings of his mind during those years. Now he is suddenly called to the great work of his life after eighty years of preparation; he is now called to the most difficult and harassing task that any man had ever been called on to perform. The host of the people he was to deliver would be much harder to manage than a flock of sheep. "Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt." Moses did not then feel so important as he did when he left the courts of Pharaoh forty years before. He had learned that rashness was a disadvantage, and that patient forbearance was a virtue. He was now humble, no longer the proud son of the king's daughter. Then he thought he was the proper one to deliver his brethren; now he says to Jehovah, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" Moses was certainly now not seeking the office of leader of Israel's hosts; he certainly was not a candidate for the position. He felt that he was not qualified for such a task, nor even to appear before Pharaoh. How unlike some present-day candidates for pulpits and offices. They seek to impress the people with the idea that they are fully qualified for any work they may be called on to do, as much as to say, "Here I am; I am the very one you need—better qualified for the place than any other man you can find." Read again what Moses said, and then do some thinking.

SOME REFLECTIONS

"And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; and he was mighty in his words and works. But when he was well-nigh forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, smiting the Egyptian: and he supposed that his brethren understood that God by his hand was giving them deliverance; but they understood not." (Acts 7:22-25.) Moses was also lacking in understanding at that time. He was in too much of a hurry; in a greater hurry than God was.

It is not well to try to move faster than God does. Some sad mistakes have been made along that line by good men and women. Abraham and Sarah tried to hurry up the fulfillment of God's promise that a son should be born to Abraham. (Gen. 16:1-6.) The king's business does not always require haste, even if David did say as much when he was making a false statement to Ahimelech.

"Take time to be holy" is good advice. It took a long time of quiet living and meditation for Moses to become fitted for his great work. People sometimes get in such a rush about the Lord's work that they have little or no time to think of him, nor to meditate on his word, nor to give him much consideration. And that sort of fever increases till doing things becomes more important in their eyes than humble service to God in God's own appointed way. "Wait for Jehovah: be strong, and let thy heart take courage; yea, wait thou for Jehovah." (Psalm 27:14.)

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Evils of rashness.
 A study of two shepherds, Moses and David.
 God's apparent slowness in working out his plans.
 How we may lose sight of God while trying to serve him.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
 Give conditions of the Hebrews when Moses was born.
 Give incidents connected with the birth and childhood of Moses.

Verse 1

How came Moses to be in Midian?
 What needed training would Moses get in Midian?
 How came he to be at the mount of God?

Verses 2, 3

Give some dates in the life of Moses.
 What strange sight did Moses behold; and what did he propose to do?

Verses 4-6

Tell about who appeared in the bush, and what he said.
 How did God identify himself to Moses?
 What had God said to Jacob as he fled to Padan-aram?
 What use did Jesus make of what God said to Moses?
 Why do good men fear in the presence of a heavenly being?

Verses 7-9

How long had the Hebrews now been in slavery?
 What did God say about hearing them?
 Whom does God lead?

Verses 10-12

What is unique about the career of Moses?
 On what mission would God send him, and what did he say in reply?
 Discuss the difference between Moses and some candidates for pulpits and offices.
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson III—July 18, 1943

GOD ENCOURAGES MOSES

Ex 3:13-16; 4:10-17

13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

16 Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, hath appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt.

10 And Moses said unto Jehovah, Oil, Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

11 And Jehovah said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh a man dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? is it not I, Jehovah?

12 Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak.

13 And he said, Oil, Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.

14 And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is there not Aaron thy brother the Levite? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.

15 And thou shalt speak unto him, and put the words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do.

16 And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and it shall come to pass, that he shall be to thee a mouth, and thou shalt be to him as God.

17 And thou shalt take in thy hand this rod, wherewith thou shalt do the signs.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Certainly I will be with thee." (Ex. 3:12.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 121.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

July 12.	M	Moses Called to a Great Task (Ex. 3:13-17)
July 13.	T	God Encourages Moses (Ex. 4:1-9)
July 14.	W	God Promises Help (Ex. 4:10-17)
July 15.	T	God Encourages Paul (Acts 18:5-11)
July 16.	F	The Promise of Victory (John 16:25-33)
July 17.	S	A Psalm of Trust (Psalm 27:1-14)
July 18.	S	The Abiding Presence (Matt. 28:16-20)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—The same as last lesson, which see.

Place.—Midian.

Persons.—Jehovah, Moses, Aaron, and Pharaoh.

Lesson Links.—Experience and age had taken the egotism and rashness out of Moses. He now felt humble, and unable to go before Pharaoh—felt that he was not great enough to stand before a mighty monarch; neither did he feel equal to the task of leading the children of Israel out of Egypt. To encourage him Jehovah said, "Certainly I will be with thee." If God would go with him, how could he fail? Then God made a statement, which, at first glance, seems singular: "And this shall be the token unto thee, that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain." (Verses 10-12.) When God called a man to do a certain thing, the man needed definite proof that the call was from God, and that he was not being deceived in the matter. The demonstrations at Sinai would be the climax of the many proofs to Moses that God was with him. After that, he could have no doubts. Hence, when God sent a man on a mission, miracles served a double purpose: they proved to the people that God was with him, and also assured the man sent that God was with him. This would give him confidence and courage. Hence the signs that Moses wrought, together with the great demonstrations at Sinai, not only convinced the people that God had sent him, but they also served as a means of assuring Moses that he was not a victim of a mere hallucination, but his call was real. Some people even now deceive themselves, or become deceived by circumstances, into thinking that they have a special call from God to do certain things. They alone first become judge of the matter, and then they succeed in leading others into the same notion; yet they can offer no proof that God is with them.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

How Moses Was to Answer the People's Unbelief (Verses 13-15)

"This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? him hath God sent to be both a ruler and a deliverer

with the hand of the angel that appeared to him in the bush." (Acts 7:35.) Forty years had passed since they asked Moses that question; then he could make no effective answer. At that time God had not sent him to be their deliverer; he was then acting on his own responsibility. Now when God is sending him to be a ruler and deliverer, he realizes that he must be able to answer that question. Most of those then living had been born in slavery; in their grinding slavery they could not have learned much beyond their daily tasks. Being constantly surrounded by idolatry, and having taskmasters that knew not God, the greater part of them likely had lost all sight of God. For Moses to tell them that the God of their fathers had sent him would not mean much to them. If they thought at all about the God of their fathers, the most of them had long since decided that he had forgotten them, or else had no power in Egypt. What therefore would Moses tell them when they asked him the name of the God that sent him? Moses knew that he would find very little knowledge of God among his people, and it is possible that Moses had no very clear ideas about Jehovah. The almost universal notion then was that there were many gods, and that each nation, race, or country had its own god or gods. The children of Israel, sharing that idea, would certainly want to know the name of the God that sent Moses. "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM." Or, "I AM WHO AM." The designation signifies, "I am he that exists." He is self-existent, independent, eternal; he is, not was nor will be. With him all time is an eternal now. Our finite minds cannot fully grasp him; we cannot comprehend the eternity and perfection of his being. To show the eternity of his own being, Jesus said, "Before Abraham was born, I am." Abraham "was," but "I am." (John 8:58.) Hence God said to Moses, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." He would impress upon the minds of the children of Israel that he was the Existing One, and was not made by hands as were idols, nor subject to death as were the sacred animals of the Egyptians, nor derived from some other god, as the Egyptians fancied some of their gods to be. The children of Israel would be affected in their thinking of gods by the notions prevailing around them. Their condition showed them plainly that they could not look to any of the gods of the Egyptians for any favors. To stir up their interest in Moses' mission, he was to remind them that this Jehovah, this I AM, who had sent him, was the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. In this mode of speech God was making himself known to them in a way that they could understand, in a way that would also stir in them a feeling of personal interest. He was thus putting himself before them as their God. It all shows that God reveals himself and his ways in such manner as the people can grasp. It is not to be inferred from what is said that all the children of Israel had sunk so low in knowledge as to lose all ideas of Jehovah.

The Elders of Israel (Verse 16)

"Go, and gather the elders of Israel together." These were the older men, the heads of families; and for that reason they were the leaders of the Hebrews. It is not likely that the children of Israel at this time had any sort of formal organization. Under the circumstances then prevailing, it does not seem that any sort of organized

government among them could have been possible. These men were not therefore elders by appointment, but were elders in the nature of things. The heads of families exercised authority over the families. On this occasion Moses was to proceed in an orderly way. The mistake he made when he first left the courts of Pharaoh must not be repeated. He was not to go first to the people, and stir them into a frenzied mob; he must work in connection with the elders. The people would hear them more readily than they would a stranger. Nor was he to go alone to Pharaoh; he must go before Pharaoh with representatives of his people. Pharaoh must be made to understand that Moses was not alone in his demands, but was merely making known the demands of the whole Hebrew race. God was now about to deliver the children of Israel from their cruel bondage, but he would use human agents in doing so. When God comes down to inaugurate any great work among men, or to execute any plans concerning men, he uses human agency. He would deliver Israel, but he would use Moses, Aaron, and the elders of Israel in doing so. Later, when he delivered Israel from their oppressors, he always did it through human agency. And when he would save men from sin through Jesus Christ, he used chosen agents, the apostles, through whom to make known his plan for saving men. He still uses human agents in carrying out that plan. "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.) The fact that God uses human agents in carrying on his work does not make it any less the work of God; but it does give importance and dignity to human beings that many fail to appreciate.

Moses Begs to Be Excused (Ex. 4:10-13)

To make excuses is a common weakness. In the parable of the man and his great supper, that fault is emphasized. When the supper was ready, the man sent a servant to tell the expected guests, "Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse." And so it was with the great man Moses. Usually, as in this case, there is some background for the excuse, but not a real reason. There is never any real grounds for refusing to do what God commands. Moses said, "Oil, Lord, I am not a man of words." The translators inform us in the margin that the Hebrew word translated eloquent in the text means a man of words. There is a difference. He would not be fluent in speech in either the language of the Egyptians nor of his brethren, for he had been forty years away from both. No man can be fluent in the use of a language he has not spoken in forty years. It seems that this was what Moses had in mind, for Stephen tells us that he was mighty in his words. (Acts 7:22.) Aaron, of course, would be skilled in the use of both languages. But even so, we know that a man's words may be powerful, even if few. Follow up the history of Moses and see the power he exerted over people with his words. To cause him to see the weakness of his excuse, Jehovah said, "Who hath made man's mouth? . . . is it not I, Jehovah? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak." That should have silenced Moses; but he, like others, wanted to shift the burden on someone else's shoulders. And so he said, "Oil, Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send." Send anybody but me. It is apparent that Moses did not want to go.

Perhaps his brethren's thrusting him from them forty years before made him reluctant to go to them again. When Moses had used all the excuses he could think of, he pleaded with the Lord to send anybody but him.

The Anger of Jehovah Kindled Against Moses (Verses 14, 15)

We know of God's attributes only as he is revealed to us in the Bible. Too many people try to fix up attributes for God to please themselves. Many of us are likely to allow our own ideas of deity to color what we learn from the Bible. Too many people in their imaginations have created a god of their own, such a god as they fancy God should be. They would rob him of all attributes save mercy and love—a sort of unjust mercy and perverted love. But God was angry with Moses. The Bible often speaks of the anger of Jehovah, even of his fierce anger. "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29), as well as love. But we must not conclude that he flies into an angry, unreasoning rage, as men often do. He is displeased with the disobedient, and punishes them, though he is long-suffering. God is never angry without cause; and he has cause to be angry when men are perverse and rebellious. He had cause to be angry with Moses. The many excuses Moses made bordered on rebellion; when he asked Jehovah to send someone else, he showed plainly that he did not want to go. "And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Moses." He would not excuse Moses, but would give him his brother Aaron to be his spokesman; Aaron would therefore share honors with him. Aaron would meet him on the way, and would be glad; it would be a happy meeting after forty years of separation. "And I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do."

Aaron the Spokesman for Moses (Verses 16, 17)

"And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people." Moses would tell Aaron what to say, and he would say it to the people. He was known to the people, and they would the more readily hear him than Moses, whom many of them had never seen. He would speak as Moses directed. That same plan would be followed when they went before Pharaoh. "And Jehovah said unto Moses, See, I have made thee as God to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet." (Ex. 7:1.) Here we see clearly the function of a prophet. He is one who speaks for another, or, rather, one through whom another speaks. God's prophet is God's spokesman through him God speaks to people. Through the prophet God makes revelations to people, whether it be some present truth, some duty, or some future event. In this plan to deliver the Hebrew people from Egypt, Moses would be as God and Aaron would be his prophet—through Aaron God would speak to both Pharaoh and the children of Israel. "And thou shalt take in thy hand this rod, wherewith thou shalt do the signs." Moses was now thoroughly equipped for the task set before him. God had given him certain signs to perform to show the people that God was with him, and he had given him Aaron to do his talking, and Jehovah had promised to be with them.

SOME REFLECTIONS

It is hard to develop and maintain a well-balanced character. Humility is a virtue, which, if carried too far, results in rebellion.

It was well for Moses to overcome his rashness, and become humble; but it was not well for his humility to keep him from promptly doing what God commanded him to do. A man, lacking in humility, may overestimate his importance and ability; but when God commands, and humility says, "I can't," it becomes stubborn rebellion. Let no man think he is so little that he cannot do what God commands him to do. The Bible does not idealize humanity—not even its heroes. It records the drunkenness of Noah, the falsehood of Abraham, and gives a full account of the awful sin of David. It tells of Peter's denial of Christ, and of his hypocrisy at Antioch. It tells how Moses tried to find a way to keep from carrying out God's orders. Human productions are not so impartial.

In spite of man's weakness God uses him. If he used no imperfect people in carrying out his plans, he would use no men at all. All great works and all human developments have come through the agency of imperfect human beings. Only Jesus was perfect, but we know of his perfection and of his plan of salvation only through the agency of men. The fact that God so uses imperfect men is encouraging.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

How a virtue may become a vice.
Some examples of God's use of human agencies.
Our part in carrying out God's plan of saving sinners.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
Why was Moses reluctant to answer God's call?
What two purposes do signs serve?

Verses 13-15

What did Stephen say of "this Moses"?
Why would Moses have to explain to the people who sent him?
What does the name mean that Moses was to give?
What other description was Moses to give of the one who sent him?

Verse 16

Whom was Moses to call before him, and why?

What use does God make of human agencies?

Ex. 4:10-13

What objection does Moses here make?
In what sense could this statement be true in the light of what Stephen said?
How would Aaron have the advantage of him?
What plea did Moses make, and what does it show?

Verses 14, 15

At this point, what is said of Jehovah?
Why is God called "a consuming fire"?
Name the different excuses of Moses.

Verses 16, 17

How was Aaron to assist Moses?
What is a prophet?
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IV—July 25, 1943

MOSES ASSISTED BY AARON

Ex. 4:19-31

19 And Jehovah said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt; for all the men are dead that sought thy life.

20 And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass. and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the rod of God in his hand.

21 And Jehovah said unto Moses, When thou goest back into Egypt, see that thou do before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in thy hand: but I will harden his heart, and he will not let the people go.

22 And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith Jehovah, Israel is my son, my first-born:

23 And I have said unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me; and thou hast refused to let him go: behold, I will slay thy son, thy first-born.

24 And it came to pass on the way at the lodging-place, that Jehovah met him, and sought to kill him.

25 Then Zipporah took a flint, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet; and she said, Surely a bridegroom of blood art thou to me.

26 So he let him alone. Then she said, A bridegroom of blood art thou, because of the circumcision.

27 And Jehovah said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mountain of God, and kissed him.

28 And Moses told Aaron all the words of Jehovah wherewith he had sent him, and all the signs wherewith he had charged him.

29 And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel:

30 And Aaron spake all the words which Jehovah had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people.

31 And the people believed: and when they heard that Jehovah had visited the children of Israel, and that he had seen their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

GOLDEN TEXT—"For we are God's fellow-workers: ye are God's husbandry, God's building." (1 Cor. 3:9.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 74:16-20.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

July 19. M

July 20. T

July 21. W

July 22. T

July 23. F

July 24. S

July 25. S

Moses' Wisdom (Acts 7:20-25)

Aaron as High Priest (Ex. 28:1-5)

Aaron Makes a Golden Calf (Ex. 32:1-6)

Moses Received the Law (Ex. 19:16-25)

Moses a Prophet (Deut. 18:15-19)

Moses and Aaron Before Pharaoh (Ex. 7:1-8)

Death of Moses (Deut. 34:1-8)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—See Lesson II, July 11.

Places.—Midian and Egypt.

Persons.—Jehovah, Moses, Aaron, and the elders of the people of Israel.

Lesson Links.—Jehovah was about to begin the most spectacular and revolutionary piece of work that had been done since the flood. A numerous race of slaves was about to be led out of bondage, and made into a free and independent nation in a land of their own; but he would not deliver them and make a nation of them without human agency. He would not just pick them up bodily and then set them down in a land of their own with no effort on their part. God would deliver them through the leadership of Moses; but even so, they would have to follow Moses. In their deliverance there was both human agency and human responsibility, God had selected Moses to be the leader in this great deliverance; he kept working on Moses till Moses decided to go. When he decided to do God's bidding, "Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren that are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace." (Verse 18.) At least two reasons would prompt Moses to return to his father-in-law before going to Egypt. He would want to show proper respect for his father-in-law. It would not have been right for him to go direct to Egypt, leaving

the family of Jethro and his own wife and children in the dark as to what had become of him. And there was the flock which he was tending and for which he was responsible. He would certainly return these to Jethro. Moses showed great courtesy to Jethro when he asked of him permission to visit his brethren in Egypt, "and see whether they be yet alive." On account of conditions then prevailing it seems that very little was known in one country about the internal affairs of another nation. It seems that Moses did not tell Jethro his real mission. No word of that must be allowed to circulate, lest it reach the ears of Pharaoh. He must not know of that till the proper time.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Moses' Enemies All Dead (Verse 19)

"And Jehovah said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt; for all the men are dead that sought thy life." Jehovah here shows why Moses had been so set against going to Egypt, but he did not tell Moses in the interview at the burning bush what he here told him. He was testing Moses; he would have Moses decide to go, no matter what might be the dangers. Now that Moses had decided to go, he would relieve his mind of any fear of those who had sought his life. Moses could then concentrate his mind more on the task before him. A constant fear of being seized and killed would interfere greatly with the effectiveness of his work. Till he was thus informed he could not know but that the Pharaoh who sought his life was the one before whom he was commanded to appear; even if that Pharaoh were dead, some of his officers would be just as dangerous. But they were now all dead; that removed a great burden.

Moses Departs for Egypt (Verses 20, 21)

"And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt." The Septuagint Version has "set them upon asses." Moses himself must have walked. The two sons were Gershom and Eliezer. Only Gershom had previously been mentioned. (Ex. 2:21, 22.) If the student will look at the map, and also consider their method of travel, he will see that they had started on a long journey. Moses had been told that his brother Aaron would meet him along the way. (Verses 14, 15.) "Moses took the rod of God in his hand." Adam Clarke comments: "The sign of sovereign power, by which he was to perform all his miracles; once the badge of his shepherd's office, and now that by which he is to feed, rule, and protect his people Israel." This rod became a symbol of God's presence and power among the people of Israel. According to the record, the last thing God said to Moses at the burning bush was, "And thou shalt take in thy hand this rod, wherewith thou shalt do the signs." The use of this rod in connection with his performing the signs would impress these simple hearted people. Moses was first to do these signs before his own people to induce them to believe that God had sent him. God had outlined his procedure as recorded in verses 1-9. Now Jehovah gives Moses this additional charge: "When thou goest back into Egypt, see that thou do before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in thy hand." And so these signs were to be performed before Pharaoh as evidence that Jehovah had sent him; but Jehovah did not mean anything to Pharaoh. When the

test did come, Pharaoh did not think anyone, not even Jehovah, had any say as to what should be done with the children of Israel; did they not belong to him? He would not see that anyone else had any rights in them or over them. "But I will harden his heart, and he will not let the people go." When it is said that God does a thing, people are too ready to jump to the conclusion that he does it by some direct operation. It is not here stated how God would harden Pharaoh's heart. Of one thing we can be sure, namely, that God does not make people hardhearted and rebellious by any power exerted directly upon them. That would make God the author of their sins and rebellion. God does not do so much as to tempt men to sin; much less therefore would he desire to harden their hearts so that they could not do otherwise than rebel against him. But a command of God may result in the hardening of a man's heart. It will certainly do so, if a man rebels against the command; and each act of rebellion makes the heart harder and more set against doing the will of God. In this way it may be said that God hardens men's hearts by seeking to lead them to do right. Hence it may be said concerning the same person, that God hardens his heart and that he also hardens his own heart. When we follow up God's dealings with Pharaoh we will find this to be true in his case.

What Moses Was Commanded to Say to Pharaoh (Verses 22, 23)

"And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith Jehovah, Israel is my son, my first-born." Pharaoh would not accept that; were not the people of Israel his slaves? What claims could anyone else have on them? He felt that they were his, and that no one else had any rights in them; how could his property belong to someone else? "Let my son go, that he may serve me." Here Jehovah calls the whole race of Israel his son. But Pharaoh would most certainly dispute Jehovah's claim of ownership, for he claimed them as his. Their service belonged to him, so he thought. God's claim that they belong to him, and should be allowed to serve him, would further harden Pharaoh's heart; it would stir in him a determination to see that Jehovah did not take his property from him. Here Jehovah and a mighty king would join issue. It would be an unequal contest, though Pharaoh would not think so, until Jehovah would have carried out the warning he here gives: "Behold, I will slay thy son, thy first-born." In triumphing over Pharaoh Jehovah would gain fame and honor among all the nations.

A Bridegroom of Blood (Verses 24-26)

In establishing the covenant of circumcision with Abraham, God said, "He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." (Gen. 17:13, 14.) Moses had not circumcised his son, as the Lord required. As the uncircumcised son was to be cut off from his people, some have thought that Jehovah was about to kill the son, and not Moses; but the language has to be forced somewhat to make out that idea. Moses was the guilty party; he had failed to comply with God's law.

Just what happened to Moses, we are not informed. As his wife Zipporah performed the circumcision on the child, it would seem that Moses was not able to do so. He was the one to do the work; perhaps he was too ill to do so. Because of the circumcision, Zipporah called him a bloody bridegroom—"A bridegroom of blood art thou, because of the circumcision." It was perhaps at this point that Zipporah returned to her father with her sons, for she did not go all the way to Egypt with Moses, as we learn from Ex. 18:1-6.

Aaron Comes Out to Meet Moses (Verses 27, 28)

"And Jehovah said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mountain of God, and kissed him." Jehovah must have had Aaron to start to meet Moses before Moses started, for he had traveled much farther than Moses had. The difference in their speed could not have accounted for the difference both had traveled. It is all but certain that Aaron and Moses had not met since Moses left Egypt. For the sake of his own safety, it is not likely that Aaron told anyone where he was going; perhaps he himself did not know where he would finally stop. It was a happy meeting after forty years of separation. Moses gave Aaron a full account of all that God had said to him at the burning bush, and acquainted him with all the signs which God had charged him to perform before the people and before Pharaoh.

The People Believed and Worshiped (Verses 29-31)

Notice the brevity of the history; nothing is said about their journey back to Egypt. "Moses and Aaron went" that is all. All the elders of the children of Israel were gathered together. To notify all these men must have been quite a task, for they had to go to see each one. When they were called together, Aaron became the spokesman—"Aaron spake all the words which Jehovah had spoken unto Moses." It is likely that only a brief outline is given of what Jehovah had said to Moses in the interview at the burning bush. It seems that in every case Moses performed the signs with the rod of God. All the signs that God had charged Moses to perform were performed in the sight of the people. It seems therefore that more were present than the elders of Israel. "And the people believed." Believed what? Certainly what Aaron had told them. The signs convinced them that God's hand was in the matter; they were therefore ready to believe what was said. It required both the words and the signs to lead them to believe. Signs alone would have accomplished nothing more than to excite wonder. Words alone would have seemed to them as idle dreams—mere words of no weight. Moses had come on a mission which differed radically from anything known to man. It was a mission, too, that no man could carry out, unless God was with him. For their own sake the people needed to know that Moses and Aaron were not seeking some advantage over them for their own profit; and they needed also to know that they were not enthusiasts undertaking this great move on their own responsibility. Their miracles would be signs that God was with them, and that their words were from God. The people therefore believed what Aaron had said, or, rather, what Moses said through Aaron. "And when they heard that Jehovah had visited the children of Israel, and that he had seen their affliction, then they bowed their

heads and worshipped." And yet none of them knew, not even Moses and Aaron knew, what lay before them before they got out of Egypt.

SOME REFLECTIONS

"By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward." (Heb. 11:24-26.) In doing this Moses gave us an outstanding example of unselfish service. In the royal family he had full opportunity to gratify all fleshly desires—"the pleasures of sin." And so far as we know he had before him the prospects of the throne of this mighty kingdom—all the treasures of Egypt. Such pleasures and prospects would mean much to any strong, ambitious man. Moses, could not have been unmindful of these things, and he had his choice. His love for his people, the people of God, moved him to give up all his pleasures and prospects; his heart turned to them in their unjust and cruel slavery.

A man's occupation and mode of living during a period of years, have much to do in developing his habits of thought and action. We see this truth demonstrated all about us. Witness also the rashness of Moses when he first left the royal family (Ex. 2:11-15), and there see his humility forty years later when God spoke to him from the burning bush (Ex. 3:1-12). "Now the man Moses was very meek above all the men that were upon the face of the earth." (Num 12:3.) Time, mode of living, and occupation had wrought a great change in Moses; God's hand was in it all.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The faith of Moses.
 What Moses gave up.
 The development of the character of Moses.
 The hardening of Pharaoh's heart.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
 Give a discussion of human agency in the plans of God.
 Read and comment on verse 18.

Verse 19

What encouraging statement did Jehovah make to Moses?
 Why make this statement at that time?

Verses 20, 21

What is meant by "the rod of God"?
 What use was Moses to make of it?
 Before whom was Moses to perform his signs?
 How does God harden hearts?

Verses 22, 23

What was Moses commanded to say to Pharaoh?
 What would result, if Pharaoh refused?

Verses 24-26

Give the origin of the covenant of circumcision.
 What had Moses failed to do?
 Who performed the rite on his son?

Verses 27, 28

What did Jehovah command Aaron to do?
 What was he to do as an aid to Moses?
 Where did Moses and Aaron meet?

Verses 29-31

How did they proceed when they reached Egypt?
 What were the results?
 Why were both words and signs necessary?
 Discuss the reflections.

GOD DELIVERS HIS PEOPLE

Ex. 5:22, 23; 6:1-7; 12:51

22 And Moses returned unto Jehovah, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou dealt ill with this people? why is it that thou hast sent me?

23 For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath dealt ill with this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.

1 And Jehovah said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for by a strong hand shall he let them go, and by a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land.

2 And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am Jehovah:

3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as God Almighty; but by my name Jehovah I was not known to them.

4 And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their sojournings, wherein they sojourned.

5 And moreover I have heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant.

6 Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am Jehovah, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with great judgments:

7 And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God, who bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

51 And it came to pass the selfsame day, that Jehovah did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." (Psalm 50:15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 81:8-16.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

July	26.	M	God Promises Deliverance (Ex. 5:22 to 6:6)
July	27.	T	God Keeps His Promise (Ex. 12:50, 51)
July	28.	W	God Delivered David (1 Sam. 17:37, 46-47)
July	29.	T	God Delivered Daniel (Dan. 6:16-23)
July	30.	F	God Delivers from Disease (Luke 13:10-16)
July	31.	S	God Delivers from Prison (Acts 16:22-32)
August	1.	S	God Delivers from Sin and Satan (Mark 2:1-12)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time. Dates by different authors vary from 1491 B.C. to 1648 B.C.

Place.—Egypt.

Persons.—Jehovah, Moses, Aaron, Pharaoh, and the children of Israel.

Lesson Links.—The great conflict, the king of Egypt against the King of the universe, was ready to begin. After convincing the children of Israel that the time of their deliverance had come, and that Moses and Aaron were to be God's agents in this deliverance, Moses and Aaron then went before Pharaoh, as Jehovah had commanded them, and said to Pharaoh, "Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is Jehovah, that I should hearken unto his voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, and moreover I will not let Israel go." (Ex. 5:1, 2.) In these words Pharaoh defied Jehovah; he would match his power against the power of Jehovah. "Let my people go," said Jehovah; "I will not," said Pharaoh, The contest was on; the winner would make his name

famous. But Moses and Aaron would have another word with Pharaoh before anything was done. This time they pleaded with him, instead of demanding. "The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword." But Pharaoh told them to get back to work; that they were keeping the people from their work. He considered Moses and Aaron as his slaves. It does not seem that he had any idea as to who Moses was. He charged his taskmasters to make the burdens of the children of Israel heavier. Certain of the children of Israel were made officers over groups of workers, to see that each day's assignment of work was done. When a day's assignment was not completed, the taskmasters beat these officers. These officers then went before Pharaoh, and told him their troubles, and said, "But the fault is in thine own people." Pharaoh disregarded their plea, saying, "Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and sacrifice to Jehovah." And he sent them back to work. "And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case." And in their shortsightedness, they blamed Moses and Aaron for their increased troubles.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Moses Complains to Jehovah (Verses 22, 23)

The officers of the children of Israel complained to Moses and Aaron, and now Moses makes his complaint to Jehovah. He really charged Jehovah with being too slow. Moses was in a greater hurry than was Jehovah. It required a good deal of talk to get Moses in the notion to be the leader in delivering the children of Israel from bondage; but when he did start, he wanted things to happen in a hurry. That seems to be human nature. We may be very slow in obeying God, but we want him to act promptly. Moses could not see why Jehovah had sent him, unless he himself was going to act promptly. He virtually said, "As you have done nothing to deliver the people, but instead have caused an increase of their burdens, why did you send me?"

Jehovah Replies to Moses (Ex. 6:1)

Moses was discouraged. To give him assurance Jehovah said, "Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh." Moses' complaint, previously mentioned, amounted almost to a charge that Jehovah was not doing what he promised to do. Now he tells Moses that matters would be so managed that Pharaoh would thrust Israel out of Egypt. That literally became so. "Moses found that his interference had only rendered the condition of Israel worse than before; for Pharaoh set Jehovah at defiance, and the people were sinking in abject despondency. But at this crisis the Lord declared that he would display his own power, and effect their deliverance himself, that he might have all the glory of it. When Pharaoh felt the power of God's indignation, he not only consented to Israel's departure, but he and his people urged and hastened it; yet this consent was extorted by force, and was entirely contrary to Pharaoh's habitual inclinations ."—Scott.

"I Have Remembered My Covenant" (Verses 2-5)

God said to Moses, "I am Jehovah." I am the existing one. "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as God Almighty"—the all-sufficient one, the one who possesses all wisdom, power, and dominion. Of the last clause of verse two Scott says, "It is most probable that the latter clause should be read with an interrogation: 'And was I not known to them by my name Jehovah?' It is a fact that this name appears a number of times in Genesis. But as Moses wrote Genesis after God introduced himself to Moses as Jehovah, it is thought that Moses himself used the name in some references to God in the book of Genesis. It seems that God here refers to himself as Jehovah to remind Moses that he was the self-existing one, and therefore the one who made the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He had covenanted with them to give them the land of Canaan. Now he was about to fulfill that covenant by delivering their children from bondage, and leading them into the land of Canaan. If the covenant was not to be fulfilled to their children, but was meant for them as individuals, the giving of that land to the children of Israel would not be a fulfillment of that covenant. Why then should Jehovah refer to that covenant in this connection? and why should he say that he remembered that covenant? No, Jehovah had not forgotten that covenant, but would fulfill it in giving the land to these people who were then in bondage. Did he fulfill it? In verse 8 Jehovah said to them, "And I will bring you in unto the land which I swear to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for a heritage: I am Jehovah." This land promise made to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, was meant to be fulfilled to their seed. From Mount Nebo Jehovah showed Moses all the land of Canaan, and then said to him, "This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed." (Deut. 34:1-4.) After the land of Canaan had been allotted to the tribes of Israel, it is said, "So Jehovah gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers." (Josh. 21:43.) Just before his death, in his farewell speech to the tribes of Israel, Joshua said, "And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which Jehovah your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, not one thing hath failed thereof." (Josh. 23:14.) Hence, in so far as the land promise was concerned, that was fulfilled when each tribe had his portion in the land of Canaan; but their continued possession of that land depended on their own conduct. (Deut. 4:26; 6:14; 30:15-20.)

"I Will Be to You a God" (Verses 6, 7)

Most of the children of Israel had sunk very low in their knowledge of Jehovah. They knew little, or nothing, about his faithfulness in keeping his promises. The increase in their burdens would seem to them that he was failing them. This increase in their burdens was real to them; but they could see nothing as yet to indicate that the promises made to them were not just the words of a visionary dreamer. But even so, Moses was commanded to speak to them additional reassuring words: "I am Jehovah, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians and I will redeem

you with an outstretched arm, and with great judgments." He would do more than deliver them from bondage; he would take them for his people, and would be their God. As a result of all he would do for them, they would know that he was Jehovah their God. Experience in the service of God and observance of his great works gives greater knowledge of him. Nothing will take the place of experience in acquainting one with the knowledge of God. That seems to be what is meant by these words: "Let us know, let us follow on to know Jehovah." (Hos. 6:3.) In the face of their increased sufferings since Moses made his demands on Pharaoh, his words made no impression on them. "And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage." (Verse 9.)

The Deliverance Accomplished (Ex. 12:51)

We must get a comprehensive view of what is recorded in the scriptures skipped over in our printed text. The lesson really includes everything between the two printed texts of our lesson. "And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land." Moses protested that his own people had not hearkened to him, and how could he expect Pharaoh to do so. Again Jehovah gave Moses and Aaron a charge to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt. (Ex. 6:10-13.) "And Jehovah said unto Moses, See, I have made thee as God to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet." Aaron would do the talking for Moses—deliver the message Moses gave him. After they had performed before Pharaoh the signs which Jehovah had commanded, Pharaoh still refused to let Israel go. Then they turned all the waters of Egypt into blood. Each thing that was done that should have softened his heart served only to harden his stubborn heart. The threat of frogs did not cause him to relent; neither did their actually covering everything soften him. (To trace out these plagues the student should begin reading with the seventh chapter.) Then came in succession the other plagues—the lice, the flies, the murrain in the flocks of Egypt, the boils, the hail, the locusts, the thick darkness, and the final plague. No man ever had more opportunities to see the error of his ways than did Pharaoh, but he was determined that Jehovah should not conquer in this conflict. Hence, each thing that was done to cause him to relent served only to harden his heart yet more. "And Jehovah said unto Moses, Yet one plague more will I bring upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether." These people had now been slaves for more than eighty years, and had by their hard labors greatly enriched the Egyptian nation, but had no opportunity to accumulate anything of their own. Hence before leaving Egypt they were to ask of their neighbors jewels of silver and jewels of gold. (Ex. 11:1-3.) This very thing they did. "And Jehovah gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked." (Ex. 12:35, 36.) The Common Version has borrow, but that version seems to be alone in using that word. Scott says, "The original does not in the least imply that the Israelites asked the Egyptians to lend the jewels, or vessels of gold and silver, as promising to return." Adam Clarke argues to the same import. The Jewish translation (Isaac Leeser) has ask. The

last plague was the death of the first-born in all the families of the Egyptians. It was to occur at midnight on a certain night. (Ex. 11:4, 5.) In preparation for that night the children of Israel were to procure a lamb for each household on the tenth day of the month, which was to be the first month of the year to them; on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, or between the two evenings, they were to slay the lamb, and sprinkle its blood on the lintels and doorposts of their houses. The destroying angel would pass over every such house. On that night, when the first-born died in all the families of the Egyptians, Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "Rise up, get you forth from among my people." But after they were gone the same old stubbornness rose up in Pharaoh, and he called his army, and pursued them, but lost out entirely, as we shall see in our next lesson. "And it came to pass the selfsame day, that Jehovah did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts." "Let my people go," said Jehovah; "I will not," said Pharaoh. But he did let them go.

SOME REFLECTIONS

The man or the nation that fights against Jehovah fights a losing battle. History abounds in accounts of such battles. The last great battle of that sort recorded in the Bible was the battle of the Jews against Jesus the Christ. Profane history records what happened to them, and we see what is still happening to them.

That which melts some hearts into complete compliance with God's will hardens the hearts of others. The idea of submission to some one else's will stirs some to bitter resentment. It was true of Pharaoh. He was self-willed, and any interference with his plans made him determined to have his own way. It was only in this way that Jehovah hardened his heart. It is easy to see how he hardened his own heart. God found him a vessel fitted for dishonor, and so used him.

People get mixed as to the purpose of the blood of the lambs sprinkled on the lintels and doorposts of the houses of the children of Israel. That did not make them children of God; they were his before this was done. To Pharaoh God said at the beginning of the contest, "Let my people go." At the burning bush Jehovah called them "my people." The blood on the lintels and doorposts therefore did not make Israel his people, nor did it save them from sin, but from the destroying angel. Even so, that blood saved only the first-born from death that night. And yet this blood is frequently spoken of as if it saved all the children of Israel, and made them children of God!

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The hardening of Pharaoh's heart.
The results of fighting against God.
What is a prophet?
The passover.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
What did Moses and Aaron say to Pharaoh?
What was Pharaoh's reply?
What then happened to the children of Israel?

Verses 22, 23

What complaint was made to Moses and Aaron?
 What complaint did Moses make to Jehovah?

Ex. 6:1

What answer did Jehovah make to Moses?
 What would Pharaoh finally do to Israel?

Verses 2-5

Discuss verses 2, 3.
 What covenant is referred to in verse 4?
 How was that covenant fulfilled?
 Show when it was fulfilled.

Verses 6, 7

What additional words did Moses speak to the people?
 What more would Jehovah do than deliver them from bondage?
 How did the Israelites receive these words?

Ex. 12:51

Discuss the plagues.
 What was the last plague?
 How did the children of Israel escape that plague?
 The blood of the lambs saved whom, and from what?
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VI—August 8, 1943

GOD SHOWS HIS PEOPLE THE WAY

Ex. 13:17-22; 15:17-22

17 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt:

18 But God led the people about, by the way of the wilderness by the Red Sea: and the children of Israel went up armed out of the land of Egypt.

19 And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and Ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.

20 And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness.

21 And, Jehovah went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; that they might go by day and by night:

22 The pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, departed not from before the people.

17 Thou wilt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance,

The place, O Jehovah, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in,

The sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established.

18 Jehovah shall reign for ever and ever.

19 For the horses of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and Jehovah brought back the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel walked on dry land in the midst of the sea.

20 And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.

21 And Miriam answered them,

Sing ye to Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously;

The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

22 And Moses led Israel onward from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Jehovah is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation." (Ex. 15:2.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 77:11-20.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

August 2. M

August 3. T

August 4. W

August 5. T

August 6. F

August 7. S

August 8. S

God Leads His People (Ex. 13:17-22)

The Command to Go Forward (Ex. 14:10-15)

The Enemy Overwhelmed (Ex. 14:26-31)

God's Mighty Arm of Defense (Ex. 15:17-22)

The Almighty Leader (Psalm 77:11-20)

Trust in the Lord (Psalm 37:1-7)

The Lord Our Help (Psalm 124:1-8)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—According to Usher, 1491 B.C.; according to Hales, 1648 B.C. But authorities differ considerably, some putting the date as low as 1320 B.C.

Places.—Rameses and Succoth in Egypt, and from the shores of the Red Sea to the wilderness of Shur.

Persons.—Jehovah, the Hebrews, and the Egyptians.

Lesson Links.—The children of Israel were to eat the passover in haste, with their loins girded, their feet shod, and staff in hand, ready to march. Of the night of the passover it is said, "It is a night to be much observed unto Jehovah for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of Jehovah, to be much observed of all the children of Israel throughout their generations." (Ex. 12:42.) Also in chapter 12, verses 37, 38, we have this: "And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, besides children. And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle." This term, "mixed multitude," does not refer to the Hebrews, but to various races or nationalities, who, for one reason or another, were in Egypt, and who took this opportunity to escape from conditions that were not to their liking. The women, the children, the aged, and the mixed multitude, added to the six hundred thousand able-bodied men, must have swelled the whole number to well above two million—possibly three million, or more. There being so many of the Hebrews shows that the decree that all male children born to the Hebrews must be killed had long ago been abolished; for that decree had been issued more than eighty years before the exodus from Egypt. Down the ages the Hebrew father was to teach his children the significance of the passover, which they were to observe every year. To the faithful Hebrew it was a very solemn feast. (Read Ex. 13 1-16.)

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

A Longer Journey to Avoid War (Verses 17, 18)

The short way from Egypt to Canaan passed through the territory bordering the Mediterranean Sea. The children of Israel traveled about as far in reaching Sinai as they would have traveled by the short way in reaching the borders of Canaan; but along the upper reaches of the shorter way dwelt the war-disposed Philistines. Had this vast host of people undertaken to go through the territory of these fighting Philistines, there would have been war. At this time the Hebrews were not trained to war; on the contrary, they had been so crushed and cowed by the cruelest of slavery that they were lacking in initiative, courage, and determination. They could not have had much fighting equipment and they had no military training. And so Jehovah led them "about, by the way of the wilderness by the Red Sea," "lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt." But someone might ask, Could not God have miraculously given them courage, weapons of war, and skilled hands? It is sufficient for us to know that he did not, and to know that such is not his way of dealing with people. God does not change people by some sudden impact of miraculous power. It is not a question as to what Jehovah could have done; transforming human character by miracle is not God's way of dealing with man. Neither does he

lead people into overwhelming temptations. The children of Israel went up armed out of Egypt, though they could not have been so well equipped for war as were the Philistines. Evidently these arms were given them by the Egyptians the night of the exodus, as they had no opportunity to procure arms while slaves, and likely were not allowed to keep any they might have had when they were reduced to slavery. But they did have war on the way which Jehovah chose for them to go, but it was a small affair—one battle and it was over. (Ex. 17:8-13.)

The Bones of Joseph (Verse 19)

"And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die; but God will surely visit you, and bring you up out of this land unto the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence." (Gen. 50:24, 25.) All the people of whom Joseph took this oath concerning his bones had died long before the exodus from Egypt; but Moses felt that those then living had inherited the binding force of that oath, though it was made long before he was born. "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him." "By faith Joseph, when his end was nigh, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones." (Hob. 11:22.) Someone has said, "In the Epistle to the Hebrews (11:22) it is recorded as the most characteristic example of the faith of the patriarch, that, instead of being carried, like his father, at once to Canaan, he made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones. To him Egypt was no longer an alien land. There only had he known honor without envy, and happiness without betrayal. There his bones could rest in quiet, but not forever This confidence in their emancipation was his faith." In his last speech to his brethren Joseph expressed full confidence in the return of the Hebrews to Canaan.

The Pillar of Cloud and the Pillar of Fire (Verses 20-22)

It is not possible to trace on a map the exact line of the travels of the children of Israel, but a general idea may be obtained by comparing the map and the text of their journeys. They started from Rameses and went first to Succoth, thence to Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. In their journeys Jehovah went before them in a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night; and these departed not from before the people. The pillar of fire lighted up the camp, or gave them light by which to travel. Later, when the tabernacle was erected, the pillar of cloud overshadowed it by day, and the pillar of fire was above it by night, so long as they were in camp. When the pillar of cloud or the pillar of fire moved on, they took up their journey; at the place where it came to rest, they encamped. (Num. 9:15-23.) This was God's way of guiding the people in all their travels; they therefore could not be mistaken as to the way to go. And there is another journey that we all make—the journey through life, and in that we have light. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and light unto my path." (Psalm 119:105.) "For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light." (Prov. 6:23.)

A Song of Deliverance (Ex. 15:17-19)

The student should be certain to read carefully the fourteenth chapter, for it contains the real core of the lesson. It seems probable that Pharaoh had not expected the children of Israel to flee the country; but when he learned their intentions, he pursued them with a fully equipped army. He did not want to lose them and all the material the Egyptians had given at their request. Jehovah had led the children of Israel to the Red Sea at a place where, when the Egyptians came up behind them, they were so completely hemmed in that they could not escape by their own powers. They would thus see that their escape from the Egyptian army was of God, and not of their own strength or ingenuity. It would make Jehovah more real to them, and cause them to rely more confidently on him. "And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians were marching after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto Jehovah." (Ex. 14:10.) Then they blamed Moses for bringing them out of Egypt. "And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah." They had gone as far as the Lord had led them; the proper thing for them to do was to await further directions from the Lord. Even Moses had to await further orders. Then the command came to Moses to "speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward." To have gone forward before this command was given would have meant drowning; to refuse to go forward when it was given would have resulted in their falling into the hands of the Egyptians. But Jehovah had to open up a way, so that they could go forward. In their song of deliverance they sang, "And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were piled up, the floods stood upright as a heap; the deeps were congealed in the heart of the sea." (Ex. 15:8.) "And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left." To hide them from the Egyptians, "the pillar of cloud removed from before them, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel." (Ex. 14:19, 20.) This cloud was darkness to the Egyptians, but light to the children of Israel. With a wall of water—congealed, frozen—on either side, and a cloud over and behind them, they were completely covered—completely hidden from the Egyptians. When the Egyptians tried to follow, the waters returned in their might, and completely destroyed all the pursuing Egyptians—"there remained not so much as one of them." "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, which the Egyptians assaying to do were swallowed up." (Heb. 11:29.) They were not entirely free from the Egyptians till they crossed the Red Sea, and were therefore not entirely free to follow Moses till their masters were destroyed. "For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." (1 Cor. 10:1, 2.) This was the end of their Egyptian slavery. "Thus Jehovah saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore." It is no wonder therefore that they sang a song of deliverance and praise to Jehovah. The first eighteen verses of the fifteenth chapter of Exodus contains the song of deliverance. It

concludes in expressions of confidence in their being finally placed in the land of promise. Whether the phrase, "the mountain of thine inheritance," refers to Canaan as a country of mountains, or to Jerusalem as the final seat of their government, is not clear. It was the place Jehovah had made to dwell in, the place of his sanctuary. "Jehovah shall reign for ever and ever." His reign would never cease; he therefore reigns in the affairs of the whole universe. All material things, all animal and vegetable life, and all human beings, all are under his authority, though many human beings do not recognize his authority and right to rule in their affairs. Whatever use may be made of Psalm 77:16-19, it cannot mean that it rained on the children of Israel as they crossed the sea, for "the children of Israel walked on dry land in the midst of the sea." Jehovah had miraculously dried their path through the bed of the sea, but brought the waters upon Pharaoh's army in full force as they sought to follow the children of Israel.

Miriam and the Women (Verses 20-22)

It was a joyful occasion, a time of celebration. They now felt free from the Egyptians. Miriam was a prophetess. There were lessons that she could teach the women, which the men could not so well teach. Now she, with the other women, join in praises to Jehovah for their deliverance. They went out with timbrels and with dances; they expressed their joy at being delivered, with music and dancing. "Sing ye to Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously." But it seems that they did not tarry long at their place of encampment by the shores of the Red Sea; "Moses led Israel onward from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur." However it seems that they did not get very far from the Red Sea for some time, for they did not travel at right angles with the sea. The student can find some information by consulting a map which outlines the course of their journey.

SOME REFLECTIONS

The Lord saved Israel out of the hand of the Egyptians, but not by picking them up bodily and transporting them out of the land into a land of their own. Israel had to do as they were commanded; they had to do the marching. The Lord now saves people from the bondage of sin if they do what he commands them to do.

With the walls of water on either side, and the cloud covering them, the children of Israel were completely buried in the cloud and sea. This gives significance to Paul's statement that they were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. (1 Cor. 10:1, 2.) To say they were baptized by the rain is to contradict Paul. There were two elements in their baptism—cloud and sea; rain had nothing to do with their baptism.

"By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land." (Heb. 11:29.) The phrase, "by faith," here spans the Red Sea, reaching from shore to shore, and includes everything that was done in the crossing. It includes their baptism, for they were baptized in crossing. And that is generally considered a type of our deliverance from sin.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

How Jehovah led Israel
 How God saved Israel from bondage.
 How they were baptized.
 How their deliverance is like ours.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
 Describe the first passover.
 From what point did they start, and where did they camp?

Verses 17, 18

What would have been the nearest route to Canaan?
 Why did the Lord lead them another way?

Verse 19

Why did Moses take the bones of Joseph?
 In what way had Joseph showed his faith in their return to Canaan?

Verses 20-22

How did Jehovah guide them in their journeys?
 How are we guided in the journeys of life?

Ex. 15:17-19

To what point had Jehovah led Israel?
 Why did they blame Moses?
 What did Moses say to them, and why?
 What did Jehovah command Moses to say?
 Describe their crossing the Red Sea.
 How were they baptized?
 How did Jehovah save Israel from the Egyptians?
 Discuss the song of deliverance.

Verses 20-22

Discuss the part Miriam and the women played.
 Tell of Israel's next move.
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VII—August 15, 1943

GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE

Ex. 16:11-18; 17:3-6

11 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying,
 12 I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God.
 13 And it came to pass at even, that the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the camp.
 14 And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness a small round thing, small as the hoarfrost on the ground.
 15 And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, What is it? for they knew not what it was. And Moses said unto them, It is the bread which Jehovah hath given you to eat.
 16 This is the thing which Jehovah hath commanded. Gather ye of it every man according to his eating; an omer a head, according to the number of your persons, shall ye take it, every man for them that are in his tent.
 17 And the children of Israel did so, and gathered some more, some less.
 18 And when they measured it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating.
 3 And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore hast thou brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?
 4 And Moses cried unto Jehovah, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they are almost ready to stone me.
 5 And Jehovah said unto Moses, Pass on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thy hand, and go.
 6 Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Give us this day our daily bread." (Matt. 6:11.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 57:6-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

August 9.	M	God Feeds His People (Ex. 16:11-18)
August 10.	T	God Provides Water (Ex. 17:1-6)
August 11.	W	God's Wondrous Works (Psalm 78:12-25)
August 12.	T	Remember God's Bounty (Deut. 8:11-20)
August 13.	F	Security of the Righteous (Psalm 37:16-25)
August 14.	S	Feeding the Multitude (Mark 6:35-44)
August 15.	S	Jesus the Bread of Life (John 6:32-40)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—According to Usher, 1491 B.C.; according to Hales, 1648 B.C. The events recorded in the first part of our printed text occurred one month after the children of Israel started from Rameses. (Ex. 16:1.)

Places.—"The wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai," and Rephidim.

Persons.—Jehovah and the Hebrews.

Lesson Links.—While we are studying the liberation and the journeys of the children of Israel, we should keep in mind some of the outstanding facts connected with them. The children of Israel saved their first-born son in every family from the destroying angel by sprinkling the blood of the passover lambs on the doorposts and lintels of their houses. None but the first-born was in danger of death from the destroying angel, and that blood had nothing to do with their being saved from sin. The blood saved the first-born from physical death; that was its only purpose and its only effect. But the deliverance from Egyptian bondage was for the whole Hebrew race; but that deliverance was not complete till the army of Egypt, the strong arm of Pharaoh, was destroyed in the Red Sea. When the children of Israel were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, they then were entirely freed from Egypt, and were thoroughly committed to Moses as their only human leader—baptized unto, or into, him, into his leadership. It was only after this baptism that the record says, "Thus Jehovah saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians." (Ex. 14:30.) They were then able to sing the song of deliverance, and not before. In saving them from the Egyptians, the Lord did for them the things which they could not do for themselves; but he would not deliver them from the trials and hardships of their journey. Through the heat they marched three days in the wilderness of Shur, to Marah. Here they found water, but it was too bitter to drink. Directed by Jehovah, Moses cast a certain tree into the water, and the water became sweet. Here Jehovah made a covenant of health with them. If they obeyed him, he would put none of the diseases upon them with which the Egyptians had been afflicted. It was but a short distance from March to Elim, where they found twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees. They then marched into the wilderness of Sin, to a point between Elim and Sinai. At this point they were no nearer the borders of Canaan than when they started. They reached this point "on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt." Their food supply ran short, and they murmured bitterly against Moses and Aaron. Jehovah had no place in

their thinking, and the land flowing with milk and honey had lost its appeal, and their former slavery had lost its terror; only the fleshpots of Egypt lingered in their minds. Jehovah promised them food; and Moses told them plainly that their murmurings were not against him and Aaron, but against Jehovah. Such incidents call to mind the patience of Moses and the forbearance of Jehovah, and also the fickleness of humanity.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Flesh and Bread Promised (Verses 11, 12)

Jehovah had said to Moses (verse 4), "I will rain bread from heaven for you." Nothing was said as to the nature of that bread, nor in what form it would come. The people were to gather on each morning the food necessary for that day; on the sixth day they were to gather a supply for two days. The arrangement would be a test as to whether they would walk in his law or not. Moses was also commanded to tell the people that at even they should eat flesh. No hint was given as to what the flesh would be, nor how they would come into possession of it. In the morning they would be filled with bread, but no hint was given as to how the bread would come, whether they would awaken in the morning and find the bread in their tents, or where they would find it. Jehovah would satisfy their hunger, but not their curiosity. By this miraculous feeding of this vast host of people, they would know that Jehovah was their God; and as Moses and Aaron had said (verse 6), "Ye shall know that Jehovah hath brought you out from the land of Egypt." They had been murmuring against Moses and Aaron, blaming them for their being in the wilderness, saying, "Ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger." The great miracle that they had witnessed but a short month before had faded from their minds; they had lost sight of the fact that God wrought their deliverance, and were now laying the blame on Moses and Aaron, so stupid were they, and ignorant. Now, that they might keep him fresh in their minds, Jehovah would demonstrate his presence with them by miraculously feeding them every day.

Food in Abundance Furnished (Verses 13, 14)

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise." (2 Pet. 3:9.) He had promised them flesh to eat; "and it came to pass at even, that the quails came up, and covered the camp." They had flesh in abundance, but these birds did not come already dressed and cooked, though they were a free gift. Much speculation has been indulged in concerning this swarm of quails; but if you take Jehovah into account, all difficulties vanish. "Is anything too hard for Jehovah?" Why should any believer puzzle his mind about how came so many quails in the camp? It was a miracle: God's hand was in the matter; with a believer, that ends all questioning.

They Gather the Bread (Verses 15-18)

This thing that lay about on the ground was a new thing to these Hebrews. They had never seen anything like it. Had it been a natural product of that region of country, they would have seen it before that morning, and would have had no reason for asking,

"What is it?" Moses distinctly says that Jehovah fed them with manna, which neither they nor their fathers had known. (Deut. 8:3, 16.) Had it been a natural product of that land Moses would certainly have known of it, for it was in the region of country where he had tended sheep. The Hebrews did not so much as know that it was the promised bread till Moses said, "It is the bread which Jehovah hath given you to eat." On the day before Moses had told the murmuring Hebrews that Jehovah, not he and Aaron, had brought them out of Egypt, and they were murmuring against Jehovah. Now he would have them know that Jehovah was feeding them. In every possible way he was seeking to impress them with the idea that Jehovah was always present with them and caring for them. Though this bread was a free gift of God, yet it was not given them baked and ready for eating. They had to gather it and cook it. Gathering the manna must have been a tedious task; for it was "a small round thing, small as the hoarfrost on the ground." It might be prepared for use by baking or boiling. (Verse 23.) "The people went about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in mortars, and boiled it in pots, and made cakes of it." (Num. 11:8.) They had to work to get the benefits of this free gift. They were to gather only so much as they would eat that day—"an omer a head," with the exception of the sixth day; on the sixth day they were to gather a double portion, that they might have food on the seventh day. An omer was explained to be the tenth part of an ephah (verse 36), or a fraction more than five pints. For a large family a considerable quantity would be required. Jehovah made it necessary for them to work fast to gather the necessary amount; for "when the sun waxed hot, it melted." (Verse 21.) But they gathered as directed; some gathered more than others, for some had larger families than others. "He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack." It is not necessary to conclude that there was a miraculous evening up of the amount gathered. The next clause shows that each one had merely gathered what was needed—they gathered "every man according to his eating." It could not mean that the lazy or indifferent had his small amount increased by miracle, so that he had as much as anyone else. God would not thus encourage and bless either indifference or laziness. It would be reasonable to conclude that the feeble and helpless were supplied by the over amount gathered by the able-bodied of the camp. Though this food was for the physical man, Paul calls it spiritual food. (1 Cor. 10:3.) It was food not obtained in the regular, natural way. For a full account of the regulations concerning the manna the student will read the remaining part of chapter 16.

The People Again Murmur Against Moses (Ex. 17:3, 4)

Verses 1, 2: "And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, by their journeys, according to the commandment of Jehovah, and encamped in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink. Wherefore the people strove with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why strive ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt Jehovah?" In striving with Moses they were really fighting against Jehovah, for Moses was doing as Jehovah commanded. They had journeyed to that place "according to the commandment of Je-

hovah." When the people found no water at the point where Jehovah had led them, they became angry with Moses. Instead of counseling with Moses as to what could be done about the distressing situation, they became angry and came to him with the imperious demand, "Give us water that we may drink." They did not take Jehovah into consideration at all. In Egypt they had never known anything but hardships; but since they had now been the objects of some special favors, they had become arrogant and angry at the one through whom these special favors had come. In reality they were angry with Jehovah, and were taking their spite out on Moses; for Jehovah, and not Moses, was responsible for their being there. They railed at Moses, "Wherefore hast thou brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?" They were not suffering much for water; if they had been, they would not have been so arrogant and blustering. They were still able to raise a big fuss; their mouths were not too dry for that. They were not praying and begging for water, they were demanding it. The great miracles they had seen but a short time before had faded from their minds. They acted like spoiled children; they were angry rather than distressed. In their anger they were about to stone Moses. "And Moses cried unto Jehovah, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they are almost ready to stone me." But these men were human, much like all other people of all ages. It has always been true that people become angry with the man who tells them what God has commanded him to say.

Water from the Rock (Verses 5, 6)

Jehovah was leading the people, and he would supply their needs in any place where he led them. If they had had confidence in Jehovah, they would have known that he would not lead them into any such place and leave them to perish. But it appears that the people were denied the privilege of witnessing the miracle which was about to be performed. Moses was commanded to take some of the elders and his rod in his hand, and go. Moses was now on territory with which he was acquainted. Jehovah would stand upon the rock in Horeb; Moses would strike the rock, and water would come out of it. Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. The miracles which the people had seen had made no permanent impression on them. The daily miracle of the manna was accepted as an ordinary occurrence. It seems therefore that they would see no other great miracles till they witnessed the terrible scenes on Mount Sinai. Jehovah would give them water, but they would soon have to fight for it—so soon as Amalek discovered it, for water was scarce in that country. This most likely was a chastisement for their angry murmuring against Moses—in reality against Jehovah. Sometimes only severe treatment will teach people a needed lesson.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Let us not criticize too severely the stupidity and murmurings of the children of Israel. We do not doubt the reality of these miracles, nor the miracles of Christ and his apostles; and still we murmur and complain, and even rebel.

The manna sustained the body. People need food, water, and clothing; but these are not the main things of life, though many

people think only of fleshly gratification. They labor for the meat that perishes and for other things to gratify the flesh, rather than for that which endures to life eternal; and then murmur and complain, as did the Hebrews, when things do not come up to their expectations. The besetting sin of the human family is unbelief—a lack of full confidence in God. Faith is defective if it does not lead a man to put himself unreservedly under the direction of God. He will not murmur at the road over which God is leading him—he will not complain that the Christian life is a hard life. He knows that God's leading is for his good, and that God will finally lead him safely home.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The evils of murmuring.
Unbelief the besetting sin of humanity.
The relation between confidence and obedience.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

What did the Hebrews have to do to reap any benefits from the free gift of quails?

Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
Give events of the deliverance of Israel up to the present lesson.
Discuss the purpose of the sprinkling of blood on the lintels and doorposts.
When was Israel saved from the Egyptians?
What health covenant did Jehovah make with Israel?

Verses 15-18

How were they furnished bread?
What did they know about it?
Discuss the regulations governing the gathering and use of it.

Ex. 17:3, 4

What now stirred up their anger?
Why should they have counseled with Moses about the matter?
With whom were they really angry?
What shows the same trait in people today?

Verses 11, 12

What had Israel been murmuring about?
What accusation had they brought against Moses and Aaron?
How did the Lord say he would furnish bread?
What effect on them was intended?

Verses 5, 6

What shows their lack of confidence in God?
Tell how water was supplied for them.
Discuss the reflections.

Verses 13, 14

Lesson VIII—August 22, 1943

GOD GIVES LAWS FOR HIS PEOPLE

Ex. 23:1-9; Gal. 3:23-28; 5:13, 14

1 Thou shalt not take up a false report: put not thy hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.

2 Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to turn aside after a multitude to wrest justice:

3 Neither shalt thou favor a poor man in his cause.

4 If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again.

5 If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, thou shalt forbear to leave him, thou shalt surely release it with him.

6 Thou shalt not wrest the justice due to thy poor in his cause.

7 Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.

8 And thou shalt take no bribe: for a bribe blindeth them that have sight, and perverteth the words of the righteous.

9 And a sojourner shalt thou not oppress: for ye know the heart of a sojourner, seeing ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

23 But before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

24 So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor.

26 For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.

28 There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus.

13 For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another.

14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." (Luke 10:27.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 19:7-14.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

August 16.	M	Duties to God (Ex. 20:1-11)
August 17.	T	Duties to Man (Ex. 20:12-20)
August 18.	W	The Great Commandment (Matt. 22:35-40)
August 19.	T	Loving God's Law (Psalm 119:97-104)
August 20.	F	God's Law Is Perfect (Psalm 19:7-14)
August 21.	S	God's Law Fulfilled (Gal. 3:23-28; 5:13, 14)
August 22.	S	Laws for Living Together (Ex. 23:1-9)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For Exodus 23:1-9, according to Usher, 1491 B.C.; according to Hales, 1648 B.C. The Epistle to the Galatians was written about A.D. 55.

Place.—Sinai. The Epistle to the Galatians was probably written at Ephesus.

Persons.—Jehovah, the Hebrews, Paul, and the churches of Galatia.

Lesson Links.—"In the third month after the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. And when they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the wilderness of Sinai, they encamped in the wilderness; and there Israel encamped before the mount. And Moses went up unto God, and Jehovah called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession, from among all peoples; for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." When Moses repeated these words to the people, they said, "All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do." (Ex. 19:1-8.) On the morning of the third day "there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud; and all the people that were in the camp trembled And mount Sinai, the whole of it, smoked, because Jehovah descended upon it in fire." No one was allowed

to touch the mount. (Verses 16-25.) Then Jehovah spoke the ten commandments; but the people were so frightened that they said to Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." (Ex. 20:19.) Then in chapters 21, 22, and 23, Moses delivers many precepts for their guidance in the everyday affairs of life.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Against Unrighteous Testimony (Verses 1-3)

The student will realize that we are now studying some requirements of the law of Moses; yet we must know that there are certain fundamentals that are always binding, such as obedience to God and the right treatment of our fellow men. When a man invents a slanderous statement about another, he sins against God and the man he seeks to injure; and the one who helps to circulate a false report becomes guilty with the one who starts it. An unrighteous witness is one who does not give true testimony. These requirements are in what some people term the ceremonial law, and yet they exact a higher degree of veracity than does the command, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." That command does not say anything about bearing false witness in favor of a neighbor; but the verses now under consideration require a witness to tell the truth, even if it is against a poor man in his cause. None should be swayed from the right by the multitude; and yet, even now, people are likely to be swayed by the clamoring of the multitude. Justice and right must be the guide, instead of public opinion or demands. All principles of justice and right are still binding on everybody. "Thou shalt not wrest justice: thou shalt not respect persons; neither shalt thou take a bribe; for a bribe doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous." (Deut. 16:19.) Jesus classes false witness with other low and ugly sins: "For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man." (Matt. 15:19, 20.) "Lie not one to another." (Col. 3:9.) "And lie not against the truth." (James 3:14.) "Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor: for we are members one of another." (Eph. 4:25.)

Helpful Service to Others (Verses 4, 5)

The last of the ten commandments says, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's." (Ex. 20:17.) This command required no service concerning the stock belonging to another; it merely prohibited one from having an excessive desire for that which belonged to a neighbor. It did not require anyone to do anything about a lost or helpless animal of a neighbor; but these verses of our lesson require helpful service for a neighbor. If a man saw an animal going astray, and knew whose it was, he was to take the animal to its owner. If he did not know to whom the animal belonged, he must take it to his own home, and keep it till it was called for. The tenth commandment was negative—it required no helpful service. These verses of our lesson required helpful service even for an

enemy. Likely a man would render this service as much out of regard for the helpless animal as for the one who hated him.

Just Treatment of All Required (Verses 6-9)

Sympathy might move some to give the poor man the advantage in a suit; that is prohibited in verse 3: "Neither shalt thou favor a poor man in his cause." Some might be moved by greed for money or for social advantage to favor the rich and prominent, and to do a poor man an injustice. That is prohibited in verse 6: "Thou shalt not wrest the justice due to thy poor in his cause." This promotes exact justice to all in all stations of life. The law of Moses demanded exact justice of all. "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in measures of length, of weight, or of quantity. Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just bin, shall ye have." (Lev. 19:35, 36.) "Thou shalt not have in thy bag diverse weights, a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thy house diverse measures, a great and a small. A perfect and just weight shalt thou have; a perfect and just measure shalt thou have." (Deut. 25:13-15.) They were not to deal falsely in any way. "Keep thee far from a false matter." Have nothing to do with anything that is not right. No Christian can afford to fall below the standard of justice and honesty required of the Jews. "For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." (Luke 6:38.) "Take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men." (Rom. 12:17.) When a member of the church so conducts himself that people cease to regard him as honorable, he loses his influence as a Christian. "The innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked." In such matters bribes do their evil work, as they also do in clearing the guilty. A bribe may not always be money, but certain promotions and other advantages may be bribes to pervert justice. And personal prejudice may wield as much influence as a bribe. All these things may affect the testimony of a witness as much as they affect a judge or juror. And their race or national prejudice might affect their attitude toward a sojourner; they should remember that they were sojourners in the land of Egypt, and treat a sojourner right. This required them to deal fairly with the sojourner. To fail to do so even today is a species of robbery.

We Are No Longer Under the Law (Gal. 3:23-25)

The Jewish Christians were slow in breaking away from the law of Moses. At first they thought that none but Jews were entitled to the blessings of the gospel of Christ. Peter's experience in connection with the conversion of Cornelius convinced him that the Gentiles had a right to the blessings of the gospel of Christ, and his speech to the Jerusalem brethren convinced them of the same truth. (Acts 11:1-18.) Some then began to say to Gentile converts, "Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved." (Acts 15:1.) That was kept up by some, even after the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, guided by the Holy Spirit, issued a decree that Gentiles were not to be required to be circumcised and to keep the law. They were active in preaching their subversive doctrine among the churches established by Paul. It seems that they had been especially active among the churches in Galatia. The Epistle to the Galatian churches was written with the special purpose of counter-

acting their pernicious teaching, which, it appears, had done much harm among these churches. These Judaizers tried to discredit Paul as an apostle. (See his defense in Gal. 2:1-10.) He affirmed that those who sought to mix the law and the gospel were perverting the gospel, and that the curse of God rested on such perverters of the gospel. (Gal. 1:6-9.) "But before faith came." The word faith frequently stands for the gospel of Christ, the system of faith. Before faith came—before the gospel was completed and revealed, "we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed." "Kept in ward"—kept under guard, as prisoners, shut up unto the gospel. It was revealed after the law ceased. Christ was made our high priest, not according to the law, but after the law ceased to operate. (Heb. 7:28.) In these times the rich and powerful had a servant, a tutor, to conduct their children to school, and give them such training as he could. And so the law of Moses was never intended to be permanent, but to serve to conduct people to Christ, that they might be justified by faith. "Now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor," no longer under the law of Moses.

Sons of God Through Faith (Verses 26-28)

Because the gospel is a system of faith, the gospel itself is sometimes called faith, or the faith. In Christ we are sons of God through faith. In the Greek text, it is, "through the faith." It is therefore through the gospel, through obedience to the gospel, that we are sons of God. On what grounds did Paul say that they were sons of God in Christ, sons through faith? The "for" in the next verse introduces the reason for his affirmation: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." That is the reason he could affirm that they were children of God—they had been baptized into Christ. In Christ they were sons of God; they had been baptized into Christ. In this matter of becoming a Christian there is no such thing as racial distinctions. Paul here directly contradicts the teaching of these Judaizers who claimed that all other races and nationalities had to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses—had to become as Jews, or they could not be saved. Of course, after a Jew becomes a Christian he is still by race a Jew, and a Greek is still a Greek; and a man is still a man, and a woman is still a woman: but in the matter of salvation the Lord makes no distinction. Some Jewish Christians, or, rather, some Jews who professed to be Christians, never would give up the idea that the Jews were God's special people. It is hard for many Christians today to get over that idea.

Free from the Law—Under Law to Christ (Gal. 5:13, 14)

In defending the right of Gentiles to be Christians without being under the law of Moses, Peter said, "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?" (Acts 15:10.) Though we are free from the law of Moses, we are not to use that freedom as an occasion to the flesh; we are now under law to Christ. (1 Cor. 9:21.) The church is a family, and in the right sort of a family each member tries to serve the interests of the other members; through love the members are servants one to another. Selfish-

ness—self-indulgence—destroys the happiness of a home; a few bossy, selfish members can destroy the happiness and good fellowship, and therefore the usefulness, of any church. Genuine love leads to practical deeds. The law respecting our conduct toward one another is fulfilled in loving others as we love ourselves. That is practical love, not a mere sentiment; it is having regard for the other's interests, happiness, and welfare, as for our own. Freedom from the law of Moses does not give us license to do as we please; we must have consideration for others. This does not mean that we must humor a man in all his whims; that is sometimes the quickest way to work injury to a Christian. Love for others impels us to seek to do them good, even if that requires rebuking.

SOME REFLECTIONS

It is hard for people to see that the law of Moses came to an end. It is also hard for those who know it ended at the cross to use it as they should. It is hard for people to see that the ten commandments are not a perfect code of morals, and yet it should be plain to anyone who reads and thinks. The highest code of morals in the whole law is found in what some term the ceremonial law.

Laws may change, but principles do not. Some things are right and some are wrong in the very nature of our being. It has never been right to rob, or murder, or trespass on the rights of others; no one has a right to do such things. The idea that only Christians are under law to God is a vicious doctrine to teach. God still reigns over all the earth, and takes account of what you do, whether you are a Christian or not. Sin is sin, no matter who commits it.

In a mad rush for gain or high positions, people do not have much regard for others, or for the right or wrong of their actions. There is nothing that will take the place of honesty and consideration for others.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Are the ten commandments a perfect code of morals? The law our tutor. How to use the law.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

neighbor."
Discuss other points in these verses.

Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
When did the children of Israel reach the wilderness of Sinai?
What did Jehovah charge Moses to say to the people?
What did they promise?
Tell about the demonstrations connected with giving the ten commandments.

Verses 4, 5

Show how the requirements of these verses exceed the tenth commandment.
Discuss the helpful service here required.

Verses 6-9

Discuss the requirements of these verses.
How are these principles violated today?

Gal. 3:23-25

What trouble did Paul have with Judaizing teachers?
Discuss verse 24.
Discuss verse 25.

What trouble did Paul have with Judaizing teachers?
Discuss verse 24.
Discuss verse 25.

Verses 26-28

On what grounds did Paul affirm that we are sons of God in Christ?
 Discuss verse 27.
 Discuss verse 28.

Gal. 5:13, 14

From what are we free, and under what law are we?
 Discuss the things necessary to good fellowship in a church.
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IX—August 29, 1943

ISRAEL'S SIN AND RESTORATION

Ex. 32:7-10; 34:4-9, 27, 28

7 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, that thou broughtest up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves:

8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed unto it, and said, These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

9 And Jehovah said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people:

10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.

4 And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as Jehovah had commanded him, and took in his hand two tables of stone.

5 And Jehovah descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of Jehovah.

6 And Jehovah passed by before him, and proclaimed, Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness and truth;

7 Keeping lovingkindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation.

8 And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.

9 And he said, If now I have found favor in thy sight, O Lord, let the Lord, I pray thee, go in the midst of us; for it is a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.

27 And Jehovah said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.

28 And he was there with Jehovah forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Jehovah is slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression." (Num. 14:18.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Jer. 31:31-34.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

August 23.	M	Israel Sins (Ex. 32:3-10)
August 24.	T	Moses Intercedes for Israel (Ex. 32:29-35)
August 25.	W	God's New Covenant (Ex. 34:4-10)
August 26.	T	The New Covenant Recorded (Ex. 34:27, 28)
August 27.	F	The Penalty for Sin (Gen. 2:16, 17; Ezek. 18:4)
August 28.	S	The Remedy for Sin (Isa. 53:4-6)
August 29.	S	The Way of Salvation (Rom. 5:6-11)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—According to Usher, 1491 B.C.

Place.—Mount Sinai.

Persons.—Jehovah, Moses, Joshua, Aaron, and the people of Israel.

Lesson Links.—After speaking the ten commandments, as recorded in Ex. 20:1-17, Jehovah gave Moses numerous ordinances which he was to repeat to the children of Israel. These are recorded in chapters 21, 22, and 23. In chapter 23:20-33 Jehovah gave some instructions as to what they should do and what they should not do, when they reached the land of Canaan. When Moses repeated these ordinances to the people, they said, "All the words which Jehovah hath spoken will we do." (Ex. 24:1-3.) At the time they made this pledge, they thought they meant every word of it; but their pledge soon turned out to be empty words. At the bidding of Jehovah Moses and Joshua went up into the mountain, leaving Aaron and Hur in charge of the camp till Moses and Joshua returned. (Ex. 24:12-18.) While Moses was in the mount, Jehovah showed him a pattern of a tabernacle, with all its furniture, and said to him, "And see that thou make them after their pattern, which hath been showed thee in the mount." (Ex. 25:9, 40.) Then followed a description of the tabernacle and its furniture. Aaron and his sons were to be the priests to officiate in all matters pertaining to the tabernacle. Their clothing and the manner of their induction into the office of priest are given in chapters 28 and 29. "And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, the two tables of the testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God." (Ex. 31:18.) These were "tables that were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written." (Ex. 32:15.) Moses had been in the mount forty days; during this time the children of Israel had no word from him. "And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him." Aaron asked for their golden earrings. Of these he made a calf for them to worship. It does not seem that it was possible for them to be so ignorant as to say, "These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Then Aaron made an altar, and proclaimed a feast for the morrow. "And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play." Thus within a period of forty days they had forgotten the pledge they had made when they heard repeated to them the ordinances which Jehovah had given Moses for them.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Jehovah Informed Moses of Their Doings (Verses 7, 8)

"And Jehovah spake unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, that thou broughtest up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves." These people had broken the covenant into which they had solemnly entered, and turned from Jehovah to worship the gods of Egypt. Jehovah disowned them; "thy people," said he to Moses. Jehovah repeated to Moses what they had done and said. Aaron, the brother of Moses, had not suggested the making of idols; but when the people suggested it, it seems that he took the lead in the matter. It does seem that Aaron would have known better. If he knew better, he was weak enough to be moved by the

requests, or demands, of the people. Many men today are swayed by the multitudes. There are men who will listen to the voice of the people rather than to the voice of God. They are men-pleasers. "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.) When Moses came down from the mount, and called Aaron to tell what the people had done to him, that he had brought so great a sin upon them, Aaron said, "Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on evil. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him." (Ex. 32:21-23.) That was a lame excuse for such a great sin.

"A Stiff-necked People" (Verses 9, 10)

Jehovah here speaks to Moses in a peculiar way. The people had so vexed him, and had proved themselves so unworthy of his care, that he thought to destroy them; and yet it seems that he could not go against the prayers of a man like Moses, for he knew Moses would plead for them. "I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people." Jehovah speaks here as one man speaks to another. "Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them." And so it seems that Jehovah would not go against the prayers of his servant Moses. It recalls to mind the pleading of Abraham for Sodom, and God's answers to him. (Gen. 18:22-33.) And Moses did pray to Jehovah: "And Moses besought Jehovah his God, and said, Jehovah, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, that thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?" But when Moses came down from the mount, and saw what the people were doing, his "anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount."

Two Other Tables of Stone Prepared (Ex. 34:4)

On the morrow after Moses came from the mount and destroyed the calf which Aaron had made, he said to the people, "Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto Jehovah; peradventure I shall make atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto Jehovah, and said, Oil, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out." (Ex. 32:30-32.) Before the tabernacle was built, they had a tent which Moses called The Tent of Meeting. Here Moses communed with Jehovah. (Ex. 33:7-11.) "And Jehovah said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon the tables the words that were on the first tables, which thou brakest. And be ready by the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me on the top of the mount." Moses prepared these two tables of stone, and went up again into the mountain, this time alone. It will be noticed that Jehovah said, "I will write upon the tables the words that were on the first tables."

Jehovah Reveals Himself to Moses (Verses 5-7) Verses 5-7 record the fulfillment of the promise Jehovah made to Moses in chapter 33; 17-23. Verse 19: "And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and will proclaim the name of Jehovah before thee." Here Jehovah descended in a cloud, "and proclaimed the name of Jehovah." Here Jehovah gives an insight to the significance of the name Jehovah; or, shall we say, the meaning of that name. He is merciful and gracious—"I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." (Ex. 33:19.) He is slow to anger—"Like as a father pitieth his children, so Jehovah pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." (Psalm 103:13, 14.) "Abundant in lovingkindness and truth." In him these qualities abound; his love manifests itself in acts of kindness, and he is the embodiment of truth. He does not deal falsely with man, and he is the source of all truth. That his loving-kindness endureth forever is too often affirmed to give the references here. "For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his loving-kindness toward them that fear him." (Psalm 103:11.) "Oil that men would praise Jehovah for his lovingkindness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" (Psalm 107:8.) "Forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." And yet he "will by no means clear the guilty." If he will not clear the guilty, how then can he forgive sin, for are not all men guilty of sin? But when a guilty man repents, he puts sin out of his heart, and is at heart no longer guilty; but in the sight of the law he is guilty—legally he is guilty. But since the penitent man is no longer guilty at heart, he can be forgiven. He cannot be forgiven so long as he cherishes sin in his heart. God will not therefore clear a man of guilt so long as he refuses to repent—so long as he has a guilty heart. In the light of history and what we see about us, the next clause should be easily understood: "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation." And our relationships in this world are so mixed and interwoven that the innocent must frequently suffer the consequences of the guilt of others. The sins of parents may result in weakness of both body and mind of their children, and frequently bring poverty, and even disgrace, to the children; and their example and teaching often give their children wrong ideas of life. And think of what is happening to the people of this war-torn world; generation after generation will suffer from its awful ravages. The philosophy of life taught in some countries gives the children no opportunities to learn of God and of their proper place in life. The iniquity of the present generation will affect generations to come. The Lord will not clear such sinful leaders.

Moses Pleads with Jehovah (Verses 8, 9)

When Jehovah proclaimed to Moses his name and what it signifies, it made a great impression on Moses, so much so that he hastened to bow his head toward the earth, and worship. And he prayed, "If now I have found favor in thy sight, O Lord, let the Lord, I pray thee, go in the midst of us." In dealing with such a stiff-necked people, Moses felt now more than ever the need of the presence of Jehovah. "Pardon our iniquity and our sin." Peace would have

to be restored between Jehovah and the people, or else Jehovah could not go with them. Jehovah had disowned them, and talked of destroying them. This moved Moses to pray, "And take us for thine inheritance." Take us back into thy favor; it is worthy of note that Moses here classes himself with the people, as if he felt that he had sinned with them. He made no plea for special favors from Jehovah on the grounds that he felt himself to be holier than were the people.

"Write Thou These Words" (Verses 27, 28)

When Jehovah said to Moses, "Write thou these words," he must have referred to the words which he had spoken to Moses. Some of these words are recorded in verses 10-26. When they reached the land of Canaan, they were to make no covenant with the people of that land; but were to drive them out and destroy every vestige of their idolatry; "lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot after their gods, and sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee and thou eat of his sacrifice; and thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters play the harlot after their gods, and make thy sons play the harlot after their gods." Then followed regulations concerning the three annual feasts. Moses was on the mount forty days and forty nights, "he did neither eat bread, nor drink water." Since Jehovah had said to Moses, "I will write upon the tables the words that were on the first tables," the "he" in the last sentence of verse 28 must refer to Jehovah.

SOME REFLECTIONS

When Jehovah proposed to destroy the children of Israel, and to make of Moses a great nation, it does not seem that Moses gave the proposition any consideration, further than to beseech the Lord not to destroy the people. Such a prospect would have had a great appeal to some men, but not to Moses. He had no such ambitions.

"Now the man Moses was very meek above all the men that were upon the face of the earth." (Num. 12:3.) PP Some use such terms as "the moral law" and the "ceremonial law." The Bible makes no such distinction. The idea that the ten commandments are superior to the rest of the law is without scriptural support. In fact the command to circumcise a male child took precedence over the law of the Sabbath. (John 7:22, 23.) And the two commands which Jesus said were the greatest of the commands are not in the ten commandments. (Matt. 22:35-40.) He also said, "On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets."

To call the ten commandments the law of Jehovah, or the law of God, and the rest of the law the law of Moses is contrary to the Bible usage, as will be seen by any thoughtful person who will read such passages as 1 Chron. 16:40; 2 Chron. 31:3, 4; Neh. 8:1, 8, 18; 9:3; Luke 2:39. If the fact that Jehovah spoke the ten commandments makes them superior to what he spoke through Moses, it would also make them superior to the revelation of the gospel through the apostles; yet see 2 Cor. 3:7-9.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Moses—a character study.

Wrong theories about the ten commandments and the rest of the law.

Deut. 18:15-19.

Jer. 31:31-34.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

What did Jehovah say to Moses about two others?

What had become of the first tables of stone?

Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

Give an outline of incidents leading up to this lesson.

Verses 5-7

What promise do these verses fulfill?

Discuss these verses item by item.

When can the Lord forgive a sin?

Discuss the children's suffering because of the deeds of their parents.

Verses 7, 8

What did Jehovah say to Moses?

What had the people done to corrupt themselves?

What about seeking to please men?

What excuse did Aaron give for his act?

Verses 8, 9

What effect did Jehovah's proclamation have on Moses?

Why did he now feel the special need of Jehovah's presence?

Discuss his short prayer.

Verses 9, 10

What did Jehovah say to Moses about the people?

Discuss these verses.

Verses 27, 28

Discuss the contents of these verses.

Discuss the reflections.

Ex. 34:4

Discuss Ex. 32:30-32.

Lesson X—September 5, 1943

ISRAEL CALLED TO BE A HOLY PEOPLE

Lev. 19:1-4, 11-18, 32-34

1 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy; for I Jehovah your God am holy.

3 Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father; and ye shall keep my sabbaths: I am Jehovah your God.

4 Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: I am Jehovah your God.

11 Ye shall not steal; neither shall ye deal falsely, nor lie one to another.

12 And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, and profane the name of thy God: I am Jehovah.

13 Thou shalt not oppress thy neighbor, nor rob him: the wages of a hired servant shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.

14 Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind; but thou shalt fear thy God: I am Jehovah.

15 Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor.

16 Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbor: I am Jehovah.

17 Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart: thou shalt surely rebuke thy neighbor, and not bear sin because of him.

18 Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am Jehovah.

32 Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and thou shalt fear thy God: I am Jehovah.

33 And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not do him wrong.

34 The stranger that sojourneth with you shall be unto you as the home-born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt: I am Jehovah your God.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Ye shall be holy; for I am holy." (1 Pet. 1:16.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Lev. 26:3-12.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

August	30.	M	Israel to Be Holy (Lev. 19:1-4)
August	31.	T	A Holy People Must Live Right (Lev. 19:11-18)
September	1.	W	A Holy People Will Obey the Law (Lev. 19:32-37)
September	2.	T	Jesus Tells of Social Injustice (Luke 16:19-26)
September	3.	F	Injustice to Be Punished (Amos 6:4-8)
September	4.	S	A Plea for Christian Justice (Phile. 6-20)
September	5.	S	A Separated People (2 Cor. 6:14-18)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably 1490 B.C.

Place.—Mount Sinai.

Persons.—Jehovah, Moses, and the people of Israel.

Lesson Links.—Leviticus connects closely with Exodus. It really takes up where Exodus leaves off. In the latter part of Exodus we have an account of the preparing and setting up of the tabernacle; also those who were to serve as priests are pointed out, and the garments they were to wear when on service at the tabernacle are described. Out of the tribe of Levi the family of Aaron was selected to be the priestly family, and Aaron was the first high priest. "And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, On the first day of the first month shalt thou rear up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. (Ex. 40:1.) "And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up." (Ex. 40:17.) All the furniture of the tabernacle was then placed as God had directed. "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of meeting, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle." (Ex. 40:34, 35.) "And Jehovah called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tent of meeting." (Lev. 1:1.) The requirements concerning the various sacrifices are outlined in the first seven chapters. The eighth chapter tells how Aaron and his sons were consecrated as priests. But two of Aaron's sons soon perished. "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took each of them his censer, and put fire therein, and laid incense thereon, and offered strange fire before Jehovah, which he had not commanded them. And there came forth fire from before Jehovah, and devoured them, and they died before Jehovah." (Lev. 10:1, 2.) These men may have done all that was required to be done, but they did more—did things that the Lord had not commanded them to do. Their fate was a warning to all priests, and should be a warning to us not to go beyond the things that are written. "And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am Jehovah your God. After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do; neither shall ye walk in their statutes. Mine ordinances shall ye do, and my statutes shall ye keep, to walk therein: I am Jehovah your God." (Lev. 18:1-4.)

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON**Holiness Enjoined (Verses 1, 2)**

These verses enjoin holiness without specifying the things to be done to maintain a condition of holiness. A holy thing was, and is, a thing devoted to God. Holiness is not exclusively an Old Testament requirement; on that point the New Testament is as emphatic as the Old Testament. To be devoted to God requires that we keep ourselves clean and upright. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service." (Rom. 12:1.) "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.) A holy life is a clean life. As Jehovah is holy, so must his people be holy. The various precepts that follow the injunction to be holy are designed to promote the required holiness. Holiness is not a mere profession; neither is it a condition into which God lifts people by some sudden and miraculous power with no effort on their part. The injunction is, "Be ye holy."

Fear Parents—Turn Not to Idols (Verses 3, 4)

To fear mother and father is to respect and reverence them. Their age and experience should give them greater wisdom; for that reason children should give heed to what they say. And the fact that they are their parents should cause children to give them reverence. The fifth of the ten commandments said, "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee." (Ex. 20:12.) But that is one of the principles that is as old as the human family, and was not created by the giving of the ten commandments. For that reason also it is a requirement of the New Testament. Under the law of Moses a severe penalty was attached for a disregard of the respect children owe their parents. (Deut. 21:18.) In Egypt the children of Israel had been surrounded by worshipers of idols and of animals, etc. It is possible that many of them had worshiped the gods of the Egyptians. The demand they made on Aaron so soon after leaving Egypt, and the enthusiasm with which they worshipped the golden calf Aaron made, seems to show that they were merely reverting to former practices. It would therefore require special and continuous teaching to keep them from the worship of idols. "Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: I am Jehovah your God." But even now, in this country, people are not safe from idolatry. Covetousness is idolatry. (Col. 3:5.)

Honesty and Truthfulness Required (Verses 11, 12)

In verses 9 and 10 they were required to take thought for the poor and the sojourner. But the New Testament requires the Christian to be more generous to the poor than these verses required the children of Israel to be, as may be seen by reading such passages as the following: Matt. 25:31-46; Gal. 2:10; Eph. 4:27. Helping the poor helps to promote honesty; for if a man does not cultivate a generous feeling toward the poor, he may become so greedy that he will steal. If he does not actually steal, he is likely to deal falsely so as to increase his gain. And if he steals, he will lie to hide his theft

If he has a disposition to deal falsely for gain, he will lie to gain the advantage over others. If such a man is brought before the court for theft or fraud, he will perjure himself; and in so doing he profanes the name of God. Some traits of character are closely related. A failure to cultivate a generous spirit toward the poor leads to greediness and covetousness, and these in turn lead to dishonesty. A dishonest person will lie and swear falsely. Honesty and truthfulness are cardinal virtues. But what saith the New Testament? "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need." (Eph. 4:28.) "Lie not one to another." (Col. 3:9.) "Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor." (Eph. 4:25.)

Oppression and Cowardly Meanness Prohibited (Verses 13, 14)

It is sometimes easy for a crook to take advantage of another, and rob him in such way that the law cannot take hold of him. This is robbery without violence. Much needless oppression—oppression that amounts to robbery—is done by foreclosing mortgages, or collecting notes by lawful seizure of securities worth much more than the note called for, when the debtor, given a little more time, could have saved himself from financial ruin. To take advantage of a worker's needs, and pay him less than he should have, is a form of robbery. And a worker who takes advantage of a situation to charge exorbitant wages is also guilty of a form of robbery. The wages of a hired man had to be paid promptly. "Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of the sojourners that are in thy land within thy gates: in his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go clown upon it (for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it); lest he cry against thee unto Jehovah, and it be sin unto thee." (Deut. 24:14, 15.) "Behold, the hire of the laborers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out: and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." (Jas. 5:4.) To curse a deaf man would be both cowardly and contemptible. The blind have a hard time getting along at best without some one tripping them so that they fall. It would be a heartless person that would do so. But to cause some one to fall spiritually is infinitely worse.

Righteous Judgment Required—Talebearing Prohibited (Verses 15, 16)

A judgment swayed by partiality or bribery is an unrighteous judgment. The judge was forbidden to cater to the rich. Men of wealth and prominence have ways of bringing pressure to bear on the court, that a poor and obscure man cannot have. That power is sometimes used unrighteously. Neither was a poor man to be favored in his cause. To render a just judgment, the judge must disregard the financial or social standing of both litigants. The law encouraged no class prejudice. Both the rich and the poor have their rights. Right is right no matter who are on opposite sides. A talebearer is a gossip peddler; he loves to deal in ugly rumors and slanders. If he cannot find a ready-made tale to suit him, he will usually

start one, or revamp one he has heard so as to make it sound as ugly as possible. He is a social pest; a stirrer up of neighborhood trouble. James gives us a picture of the evils of an unbridled tongue. Here are some of the terms James applies to such a tongue: "a fire"—"the world of iniquity"—"is set on fire by hell"—"a restless evil"—"full of deadly poison." (Jas. 3:1-12.) "Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." (Matt. 12:34.)

Hatred Prohibited—Love Enjoined (Verses 17, 18)

In many requirements the law of Moses dealt with outward conduct, but here is a precept that goes deeper than outward conduct. "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart." Hate in the heart poisons and perverts the whole life. Hate cherished in the heart leads to malice, and malice may lead to violence. But a heart free of hatred may not be what it should be. A person might be indifferent toward his neighbor or brother—he might take no thought of him one way or the other. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This required them to do good to their neighbor, to give to him whatever he needed. "Thou shalt surely rebuke thy neighbor, and not bear sin because of him." If the brother needed rebuking, the one who failed to give the needed rebuke became guilty with him. "If thy brother sin, rebuke him." (Luke 17:3.) Paul charged Timothy to "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching." (2 Tim. 4:2.) It is a pity that the idea has grown up that, if one loves his brother, he will shield him in his wrong, rather than to rebuke him. Certainly no one must hate his brother. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." (1 John 3:15.)

Honor the Aged (Verse 32)

Jehovah would have the young to cultivate a tender regard for the aged. Nothing shows refinement of heart more than courteous consideration for the aged. The prevalent lack of this refinement is due to a failure of parents—they do not train their children to respect and reverence them. Paul charged Timothy: "Rebuke not an elder, but exhort him as a father; the younger men as brethren: the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, in all purity." The connection here shows that elder means an elder man. Timothy was to give due consideration to an older man, and he could not have been much, if any, under thirty-five years at this time; he was certainly not a mere lad, and yet he was charged not to rebuke an older man, but to exhort him as a father. It is a lesson to young preachers, as well as to all young men.

Generous Treatment of Sojourners Required (Verses 33, 34)

Any but Hebrews were strangers and sojourners. No land had been allotted to any but Hebrews. Even though the sojourner within their gates was not a Hebrew, they must not do him any wrong. He was to be treated as if he were one of their own number. "And thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt: I am Jehovah your God." This gives two reasons as to why they should deal fairly with the sojourner; but they were warned against going after their gods. It is hard for some people

to be courteous to people of other religions without becoming soft toward their religion. To be fair and gentle toward all, and yet be firm and uncompromising, is a rare combination.

SOME REFLECTIONS

In studying the law of Moses we see the need of prompt obedience to God. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope." (Rom. 15:4.) But the law of Moses ceased to be of binding force at the cross. Christ Jesus our Lord blotted out the bond written in ordinances, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross. (Col. 2:14.) But there are certain moral obligations that are as enduring as time. They did not originate with the law of Moses, nor perish with it.

All people have the same natural rights and obligations. A man's life and property are his; but a man may so conduct himself as to forfeit his rights in his property, and may even forfeit his right to his life. A man may squander his property and destroy his life by immoral conduct and drunkenness; or he may commit such crimes as to forfeit his right to live on the earth.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Moral law and positive law.

Are the ten commandments a perfect code of morals?

Is the Sabbath law still binding?

The New Testament superior to the Old.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

What is found in the latter part of Exodus?

Who were the priests, and of what tribe were they?

What is said of Nadab and Abihu?

Verses 1, 2

What is holiness?

Give some New Testament teaching on being holy.

Verses 3, 4

What should be the attitude of children toward their parents?

What should the Hebrews do about idols?

How may we be idolaters?

Verses 11, 12

Discuss the requirements of verses 9 and 10.

What is said concerning the poor?

How does care for the poor help develop honesty and truthfulness?

What does the New Testament say about helping the poor?

What is said about speaking the truth?

Verses 13, 14

Discuss the requirements of these verses.

Verses 15, 16

What may contribute to unrighteous judgments?

What about talebearers?

What harm can they do?

Verses 17, 18

Discuss the requirements of these verses.

Verse 32

What is due the aged?

Why is this so neglected?

Verses 33, 34

Discuss these verses.

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XI—September 12, 1943

ISRAEL MARCHES TOWARD CANAAN

Num. 10:11, 12, 29-36

11 And it came to pass in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month, that the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle of the testimony.

12 And the children of Israel set forward according to their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud abode in the wilderness of Paran.

29 And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which Jehovah said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for Jehovah hath spoken good concerning Israel.

30 And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred.

31 And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou shalt be to us instead of eyes.

32 And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what good soever Jehovah shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.

33 And they set forward from the mount of Jehovah three days' journey; and the ark of the covenant of Jehovah went before them three days' journey, to seek out a resting-place for them.

34 And the cloud of Jehovah was over them by day, when they set forward from the camp.

35 And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, O Jehovah, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.

36 And when it rested, he said, Return, O Jehovah, unto the ten thousands of the thousands of Israel.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Come thou with us, and we will do thee good." (Num. 10:29.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 122.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

September	6.	M	The Camp of Israel Moves (Num. 10:11, 12)
September	7.	T	God Guides in the Wilderness (Num. 10:29-36)
September	8.	W	God Provides Food for Israel (Num. 11:4-9, 31, 32)
September	9.	T	The Sin of Miriam and Aaron (Num. 12:1-10)
September	10.	F	The Spies Sent Forth (Num. 13:2, 3, 21-25)
September	11.	S	The Report of the Spies (Num. 13:26-33)
September	12.	S	God's Patient Care of Israel (Psalm 78:19-29)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably 1490 B.C.—"the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month," from the time of their leaving Egypt.

Places.—Sinai and the wilderness of Paran.

Persons.—Jehovah, the Hebrews, and Hobab of the Midianites.

Lesson Links.—"And Jehovah spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, every male, by their polls; from twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel, thou and Aaron shall number them by their hosts." (Num. 1:1-3.) Moses then tells how they were numbered. "So all they that were numbered of the children of Israel by their fathers' houses, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war in Israel;

even all they that were numbered were six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty." (Num. 1:45, 46.) Verse 47 shows that the tribe of Levi was not included in this number; and only the able-bodied men of the other tribes were numbered. That was a vast throng of people, no one knows the exact number. If you like to make estimates, you might try to figure out the possible number. Jehovah laid out for them the order of their encampments, as may be seen by reading chapter two. The tabernacle was the center of their camp; each tribe was assigned a special place. In such a vast throng there had to be order and system, else there would have been all sorts of confusion. There was also system and order in breaking camp and moving forward. While the cloud remained over the tabernacle, they remained in camp. "And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward, throughout all their journeys: but if the cloud was not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of Jehovah was upon the tabernacle by day, and there was fire therein by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys." (Ex. 40:36-38.) "And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, even the tent of the testimony: and at even it was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until morning. So it was alway: the cloud covered it, and the appearance of fire by night. And whenever the cloud was taken up from over the Tent, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel encamped." (Num. 9:15-17.)

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

From Sinai to the Wilderness of Paran (Verses 11, 12)

It had now been a little over thirteen months since the children of Israel departed out of Egypt; they had spent nearly a year at Sinai. Forty years later, just before the death of Moses, Moses, in rehearsing some bits of their travels, said, "Jehovah our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mountain." (Deut. 1:6.) Verse 13, of the chapter we are studying, says, "And they first took their journey according to the commandment of Jehovah by Moses." They left the wilderness of Sinai, and went into the wilderness of Paran. According to some maps, it was too far to the wilderness of Paran for one day's journey. Concerning the wilderness of Paran, the Bible Encyclopedia and Scriptural Dictionary says, "A name which seems to be applied in scripture to the whole of the desert region extending from the frontiers of Judah to the border of Sinai. At least, as we find it in the south of this region, bordering Sinai (Num. 10:12; 12:16), and in the north bordering on Kadesh (Num. 13:3, 26; 20:1), it seems easier to suppose that Paran was the name of the whole region marked by these limits than that there were two opposite districts bearing the same name." To get a clear view of the order of their decamping and marching it is necessary to know the order of their encampments. This is found in the second chapter of Numbers. The tabernacle, God's dwelling place, was the center; and round about the tabernacle the Levites and priests camped, for they had charge of the tabernacle. "And those that encamp on the east side toward the sun-

rising shall be they of the standard of the camp of Judah." Included under this banner, and camping next to Judah, were the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun. "On the south side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben." This group on the south side included also the tribes of Simeon and Gad. "On the west side shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim." Included under this banner were also the tribes of Manasseh and Benjamin. "On the north side shall be the standard of the camp of Dan." Under this standard, and camping on the same side of the tabernacle, were the tribes of Asher and Naphtali. Now notice the order of their breaking camp as told in Num. 10:13-28.

Moses Solicits Hobab's Company (Verses 29-32)

Hobab was a brother-in-law to Moses. His father, as we have learned, was the priest of Midian. The family are called Kenites. "And the children of the Kenite, Moses' brother-in-law, went up out of the city of palm-trees with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah." (Judges 1:16.) Moses said to Hobab, "We are journeying unto the place of which Jehovah said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good." Moses had something to offer Hobab, something good. Christians might ponder this. A church invites people to come into its fellowship; is it in condition to do good to those invited? Has it anything to offer that cannot be found anywhere else? Jehovah has promised the Christian a land of unending bliss. You professed Christian, are you traveling to that land? If not, do not invite anyone to go with you, for you cannot do them good. Moses was sure that Hobab would be greatly blessed by going with them to that land which Jehovah had promised them. "For Jehovah hath spoken good concerning Israel." He had promised to make of them a great nation, to take them for his own possession, and to give them a land so fruitful as to be described figuratively as flowing with milk and honey. Hobab, though not a Hebrew, would share with them all these blessings. But Hobab said, "I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred." This seemed emphatic, but Moses was not satisfied to let the matter rest at that. He changed his plea. He had promised, "We will do thee good"; now he assures Hobab that they need him, because of his acquaintance with that country. Hobab would be of great service to them. Moses added, "And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what good soever Jehovah shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee." Hobab was not looking for a soft spot, where all the good came his way. If he could also be of service, that was different. It seems that Hobab reconsidered, and went with them; for his children are spoken of as being in Canaan. (Judges 1:16; 4:11.) The Rechabites were Kenites. (1 Chron. 2:55; Jer. 35:1-14.) As Hobab had come to the camp of Israel to visit his brother-in-law, it would seem reasonable that he had to return to his old home to adjust his affairs and to get his family, before joining the camp of Israel permanently. This plan fits all the facts as we have them revealed. So it seems that Hobab decided that, if he could do good as well as receive good, he would go with them.

A Journey of Three Days (Verses 33, 34)

From Sinai the children of Israel start on a straight course toward the promised land, but their progress would be slow. It would

require a considerable time every morning for so vast an army of people to get started on the day's journey, and their progress would be slow. After it was light, they would have to remain at their camping place till they had gathered manna for the day. It would take some time to make camp for the night. It is not to be understood that they traveled three days without stopping for the nights. The phrase, "to seek out a resting-place," rather indicates that they were to rest a short time at that place. This would be a place where their stock could find grazing. It was a journey of only eleven days from Sinai to Kadesh-barnea. (Deut. 1:2.) Kadesh-barnea was on the border of the land of Canaan. In chapter 33, we have a list of their various encampments. It seems certain that some of the places where they camped are not noted, for the reason that there was no name by which they could be identified. Our lesson really includes chapters 11 and 12. What the people did, and the punishment inflicted on them, gave a name to this camping place—Kibroth-hattaavah, meaning, the graves of lust. Here also Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses. Miriam was the older, and as she suffered the worst punishment, she must have taken the lead in speaking against Moses. The student should be sure to read these two chapters.

Two Prayers of Moses (Verses 35, 36)

"And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, O Jehovah, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee." This prayer is a model of brevity, but it covered exactly the needs of the day's journey. It was a prayer for the safety of that vast host of people; it was a prayer that God's protecting presence be with them as they journeyed, for they were neither trained nor equipped for serious fighting. When the ark rested, Moses prayed, "Return, O Jehovah, unto the ten thousands of the thousands of Israel." This was a prayer for Jehovah's protection during the night. It, too, was a short prayer, but it covered about every blessing that Moses could have thought of. If God is with people during the day's activities, and watches over them while they sleep at night, what more could a righteous person desire? David's prayer in Psalm 68:1-3 is similar to the foregoing prayers of Moses: "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God."

SOME REFLECTIONS

The pillar of cloud guided the children of Israel in their marches, and they dared not to turn aside from its leading. And it was their light by night. This cloud would not have guided them, had they decided to go their own way. It would have been no help to any who might decide that one way was as good as another. God's way is the only way to reach the promised land. We cannot turn aside from God's way and hope to have the blessings of God upon us nor to reach our promised inheritance.

What a blessing are friends, real friends, who have an interest in our well-being! How many of God's benefits and blessings reach us through the agency of those who have an interest in us! Some of the good things God had in mind for Israel would come to them

through the agency of Hobab. Even the gospel of salvation reaches us through the agency of man.

"Though in everything our dependence must ultimately be placed upon the Lord, yet we may use the services of men as instruments of good to us, and should in our turn aim to do them good; and thus we may be as eyes and ears and hands to each other, for our mutual comfort, and to the glory of our common Lord. We should also be careful that we begin every undertaking, especially those in which the church of God is concerned, with earnest prayer for direction, assistance, and success; and not only ministers, but magistrates and princes also, should be men of prayer, as well as of activity, integrity, and ability; for whatever talents and instruments are employed, the Lord alone sends prosperity. Finally, in all our supplications at the throne of grace, the many thousands of Israel should without fail be remembered by us."—Scott. The Israel of today is the church; of course, Scott had that in mind.

Concerning the things that befell the children of Israel in their journey through the wilderness, Paul says, "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted." "Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come." (1 Cor. 10:6, 11.)

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The Kenites.
 Helping one another.
 Lessons from some recorded prayers.
 1 Cor. 10:1-4.
 I Cor. 10:5-12.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
 At what time did Jehovah order Moses to take a census of all the children of Israel?
 Who were numbered?
 How many were counted?
 What was their signal for breaking camp?
 How was their camping places designated?

Verses 11, 12

How long had it been since the children of Israel left the land of Egypt?
 What did Jehovah say about their stay at Sinai?
 Give Some idea as to the location and extent of the wilderness of Paran.
 Give the order of their encampments.

Verses 29-32

Who was Hobab; and of what country was he?
 Give the conversation between Moses and Hobab.

Which of the two propositions made to Hobab would likely appeal to him most?
 What evidence that he went with them?

Verses 33, 34

Look at the map-which is nearer to Kadesh-barnea, Rameses or Sinai?
 What would make the progress of the children of Israel slow?
 Tell what is recorded in chapters 11 and 12.

Verses 35, 36

At the beginning of a march, what prayer did Moses pray?
 When they encamped, what did he pray?
 What can you say about long prayers?
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XII—September 19, 1943

THE SIN OF MOSES AND AARON

Num. 20:1-13, 27, 28

1 And the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, came into the wilderness of Zin in the first month: and the people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there.

2 And there was no water for the congregation: and they assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron.

3 And the people strove with Moses, and spake, saying, Would that we had died when our brethren died before Jehovah!

4 And why have ye brought the assembly of Jehovah into this wilderness, that we should die there, we and our beasts?

5 And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink.

6 And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tent of meeting, and fell upon their faces: and the glory of Jehovah appeared unto them.

7 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying,

8 Take the rod, and assemble the congregation, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes, that it give forth its water; and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock; so thou shalt give the congregation and their cattle drink.

9 And Moses took the rod from before Jehovah, as he commanded him.

10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; shall we bring you forth water out of this rock?

11 And Moses lifted up his hand, and smote the rock with his rod twice: and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their cattle.

12 And Jehovah said unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed not in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.

13 These are the waters of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with Jehovah, and he was sanctified in them.

27 And Moses did as Jehovah commanded: and they went up into mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation.

28 And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there on the top of the mount: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Be ye angry, and sin not." (Eph. 4:26.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 66:1-4, 16-20.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

September 13. M

September 14. T

September 15. W

September 16. T

September 17. F

September 18. S

September 19. S

The Sin of Moses and Aaron (Num. 20:1-13)

The Death of Aaron (Num. 20:22-29)

The Death of Moses (Deut. 34:1-8)

Joshua Succeeds Moses (Num. 27:18-23)

God's Promise to Joshua (Josh. 1:1-9)

Paul Exercises Self-Control (1 Cor. 9:24 to 10:6)

The Secret of Self-Control (Gal. 5:16-25)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably about 1450 B.C.

Place.—Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin.

Persons.—Jehovah, Moses, Aaron, and the people of Israel.

Lesson Links.—It seems that the children of Israel soon forgot the severity of their bondage in Egypt, and began to think about all the things they had to eat in that land. "And the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt for nought; the cucum-

bers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: but now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all save this manna to look upon." For this murmuring "Jehovah smote the people with a very great plague." (Num. 11:4-33.) When these people neared the land of Canaan, twelve men were sent to spy out the land. (Num. 13:1-20; Deut. 1:19-9.5.) These spies brought back some of the fruit of the land and gave a glowing report concerning the productivity of the land; but ten of them said the people of the country were too great for them to conquer. Caleb and Joshua were sure they could take the land, but the people listened to the majority. "And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would that we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore doth Jehovah bring us unto this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will be a prey: were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt." (Num. 14:1-4.) God had selected Moses for their leader, but they were not satisfied with God's arrangement, and had decided to elect a man that would lead them the way they wanted to go. And they knew they were rebelling against Jehovah, for they had just said, "And wherefore doth Jehovah bring us into this land, to fall by the sword?" But two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, made a strong appeal to the people, saying, "The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceeding good land. If Jehovah delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it unto us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not against Jehovah, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is removed from over them, and Jehovah is with us: fear them not." For this speech of loyalty to Jehovah and to the best interest of the people, the whole crowd wanted to stone Joshua and Caleb. And because of this rebellion, and because they had wished they had died in the wilderness, Jehovah commanded Moses to say to them, "As I live, saith Jehovah, surely as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness." All that were twenty years old or more, when they were numbered, would perish in the wilderness, except Caleb and Joshua. "But your little ones, that ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in." They could have gone in and possessed the land, but they were now compelled to wander in the wilderness forty years. Hence, none would be over sixty years old, excepting Caleb and Joshua, when they would enter the promised land.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Hebrews Strive Again About Water (Verses 1-5)

The wilderness of Zin lay mostly to the south of the Dead Sea. Here the Hebrews found no water; at least, not sufficient water for so many people and their flocks and herds. Both people and animals must have water. The Hebrews seem to have been ill-tempered. Instead of these people coming to Moses to see what could be done about the lack of water, "they assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron." They talked like foolish children. "Would that we had died when our brethren died before Jehovah!" They

had forgotten that their own rebellion had been the cause of their wanderings in such desert places; they could have already been in the land of promise. But they blamed their troubles on Moses and Aaron. "And why have ye brought the assembly of Jehovah into this wilderness, that we should die there, we and our beasts?" They had forgotten that Jehovah was giving them what they had desired—to die in the wilderness rather than to meet the armed forces of Canaan. Jehovah had brought them up out of Egypt with a mighty hand, but now they blamed Moses and Aaron for the trials their own sins had brought upon them. That is rather a common fault of people; they like to blame someone else for troubles they bring upon themselves. Had they followed Moses, they would have been in the land of promise, "a land flowing with milk and honey." Their own rebellion, not Moses, had brought them into "this evil place." They would have had fruits in plenty had they not rebelled against going into Canaan; now they complain of the place where they were, saying, "It is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink." It was indeed a desert place. It is hard for people to reach that development of faith wherein they accept God's way as the best way. A lack of faith in the goodness, wisdom, and power of God is the cause of much sin and sorrow in this world. "Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fall after the same example of disobedience." (Heb. 4:11.)

Jehovah Gives Directions for Obtaining Water (Verses 6-9)

Moses and Aaron were greatly distressed. They went away from the noisy and rebellious people to the door of the tent of meeting; and, as if leaving everything in the hands of Jehovah, they fall on their faces. It was a gesture of humility and a feeling of helplessness. It seemed to them that they had reached the limit of their ability to do anything for the people. Jehovah would have to show them the way out of their trouble. "And the glory of Jehovah appeared unto them." By this he showed that he had not abandoned them—that his presence was still with them. To Moses he said, "Take the rod, and assemble the congregation, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes, that it give forth its water." The assembly was to see the miracle performed; and they must know that the miracle was performed through the agency of Moses and his rod. They had shown that they had no respect for Moses and Aaron; now they must see how Jehovah honored them. And they must see that Jehovah is able to meet any emergency, and to overcome all the forces of nature when it pleased him to do so. They needed to know that nothing was too hard for Jehovah, and that Moses was chosen by him to be their leader. Besides, they were led by the pillar of cloud. When the people complained at Moses, they were complaining at Jehovah. When they refused to give heed to what Moses said, they were refusing to give heed to God. The same principle still holds good. When Jesus sent the seventy out on a temporary and limited commission, he said to them, "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.) The fact that God speaks through a man does not make it any less his word; neither is an act he performs

through the agency of a man any less his work. Either these Hebrews had not learned these things, or else they thought they knew more than Jehovah,

"Because Ye Believed Not in Me" (Verses 10-13)

Moses was long-suffering toward his people, and very patient in his position as their leader. They had repeatedly blamed him for conditions for which he was in no wise responsible. When they reached the point where they could have gone on into the land of promise, they rebelled, and refused to enter into their promised possessions. That rebellion had brought all this terrible condition in which they now found themselves, and for which they now so bitterly blamed Moses and Aaron. Moses evidently was angry with them, and he railed at them. He took his rod in his hand and assembled the people before the rock, as Jehovah had commanded, and said to them, "Hear now, ye rebels; shall we bring you forth water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and smote the rock with his rod twice." In this performance he committed a grievous sin. What was that sin? There has been much speculation as to what all he did that was wrong, but need there be any doubt? There was something in what Moses said or did that did not single out Jehovah in the eyes of the people as the one who caused the rock to give forth water. Was it smiting the rock with the rod? The people did not know but that Jehovah had commanded him to do that very thing, for they had not heard what Jehovah said to Moses and Aaron. David gives this comment on the transaction: "They angered him also at the waters of Meribah, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes; because they were rebellious against his spirit, and he spake unadvisedly with his lips." (Psalm 106:32, 33.) The sin therefore lay in what Moses said—he spoke unadvisedly with his lips. In saying, "Hear now, ye rebels; shall we bring you forth water out of this rock," he arrogated to himself and Aaron the power and honor of furnishing them water. He therefore left Jehovah out of the picture, and put himself and Aaron before them as the givers of this needed blessing. While calling the people rebels, they sought to gain honor for themselves. They failed to set Jehovah forth as the source of this great blessing. Jehovah said to them, "Because ye believed not in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." They, of course, had no doubt as to the existence of Jehovah; but for once they left him out of consideration, and took matters in their own hands. They directed attention to themselves, and not to Jehovah. When people take matters in their own hands, and thereby seek honor before men, it is because they do not believe in God, but in themselves. If Moses and Aaron would not honor Jehovah before the people, he would gain the honor due him by refusing them admission into the promised land. And even though Moses and Aaron did not sanctify Jehovah in the eyes of the people, Jehovah did not refuse the people the needed blessing of abundance of water.

The Death of Aaron (Verses 27, 28)

Miriam had died at Kadesh. (See verse 1.) Miriam was the oldest of the three—Miriam, Aaron, and Moses. When the children of Israel were about to leave Meribah, the place of strife, Moses

asked of the king of Edom permission to pass through his land; but the king refused to give them passage through his land. He backed up his refusal with a force of armed men: "wherefore Israel turned away from him." They went around Edom. When they came to Mount Hor, Jehovah said to Moses, "Aaron shall be gathered unto his people; for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the waters of Meribah. Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto mount Hor; and strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there." Aaron was the high priest; the finely-wrought garments for the high priest are described in Ex. 28:1-39. These were now placed upon Eleazar, who would now be the high priest. "And Aaron died there on the top of the mount." "And Aaron the priest went up into mount Hor at the command of Jehovah, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fifth month, on the first day of the month. And Aaron was a hundred and twenty and three years old when he died in mount Hor." (Num. 33:38, 39.) Moses died a short time later at the age of one hundred and twenty. (Deut. 34:1-7.) Thus these three eminent people—sister and brothers—all died within the same year.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Jehovah had promised to be with the children of Israel and to drive out their enemies before them; but when they reached the borders of the land of promise, they refused to enter because they did not believe Jehovah. Their fear of the people destroyed their faith in Jehovah. In their fear his promises meant nothing to them.

The Bible speaks of disobedience as unbelief. "Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in failing away from the living God." "And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that were disobedient? And we see that they were not able to enter in because of unbelief." (Heb. 3:12, 18, 19.)

The death of the many thousands of Israel, who fell in the wilderness because of their unbelief (disobedience), is used as warnings to us. "Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fall after the same example of disobedience." (Heb. 4:11.)

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The rebellion of Israel at Kadesh-barnea.
Wherein professed Christians show unbelief.
Aaron as high priest.
The sin of Moses and Aaron.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
What did the children of Israel remember most about Egypt?
Discuss the rebellion of Israel against going into Canaan.

Verses 1-5

Locate the wilderness of Zin.
What complaint did the people make, and against whom?
Who was to blame for their distress?
What had they wished, and now feared?
How were they showing a lack of faith?

Verses 6-9

What was the effect of the complaint on Moses and Aaron?
 What did the Lord tell them to do?
 Show that God's word spoken through a man is no less God's word.

In what way did he manifest unbelief, as charged?
 Discuss the interesting points in the incident.

Verses 27, 28

Where had Miriam died?
 What took place between Moses and the king of Edom?
 What did Jehovah say as to Aaron?
 What was done before Aaron died?
 Where did he die, and at what age?
 Discuss the reflections.

Verses 10-13

What feelings did Moses now display toward his people, and how?
 What did he say and do at the rock?
 What did David say about the incident?

Lesson XIII—September 26, 1943

ABIDING VALUES FROM ISRAEL'S HISTORY

Deut. 11:13-25

13 And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love Jehovah your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.

14 That I will give the rain of your land in its season, the former rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy grain, and thy new wine, and thine oil.

15 And I will give grass in thy fields for thy cattle, and thou shalt eat and be full.

16 Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and ye turn aside. and serve other gods, and worship them;

17 And the anger of Jehovah be kindled against you, and he shut up the heavens, so that there shall be no rain, and the land shall not yield its fruit; and-ye perish quickly from off the good land which Jehovah giveth you.

18 Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul; and ye shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes.

19 And ye shall teach them your children, talking 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.

20 And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates;

21 That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which Jehovah sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of the heavens above the earth.

22 For if ye shall diligently keep all this commandment which I command you, to do it, to love Jehovah your God to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him;

23 Then will Jehovah drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourselves•

24 Every place whereon the sole of your foot shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness, and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the hinder sea shall be your border.

25 There shall no man be able to stand before you: Jehovah your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath spoken unto you.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people." (Prov. 14:34.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Deut. 10:12-22.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

September 20.	M	God's Promise to Israel (Deut. 11:13-25)
September 21.	T	God's Warning to Israel (Deut. 8:11-20)
September 22.	W	Israel's Mighty Deliverance (Psalm 114:1-8)
September 23.	T	The Lord Our Keeper (Psalm 121:1-8)
September 24.	F	God's Hand in Israel's History (Psalm 105:1-15)
September 25.	S	All Believers Heirs of Abraham (Rom. 4:1-16)
September 26.	S	Salvation to All Who Believe (Rom. 10:1-13)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably about 1450 B.C.

Place.—The plains of Moab.

Persons.—Jehovah, Moses, and the people of Israel.

Lesson Links.—The book of Deuteronomy is, as its name indicates, a second giving of the law—a repetition of the law. Little is known of what Israel did during the thirty-eight years following the rebellion at Kadesh-barnea. Toward the close of these thirty-eight years they headed toward the land of promise• "And the days in which we came from Kadesh-barnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, were thirty and eight years; until all the generation of the men of war were consumed from the midst of the camp, as Jehovah sware unto them So it came to pass, when all the men of war were consumed and dead from among the people, that Jehovah spake unto me, saying, "Thou art this day to pass over At, the border of Moab." (Deut. 2:14-18.) Soon thereafter there began a series of battles, in which Israel subdued the country east of the river Jordan. (See Deut. 2:26-37; 3:1-17.) It had been forty years since the law was given at Mount Sinai. All who were twenty years old and over at that time were now dead, save Caleb and Joshua. In view of that fact and the further fact that Moses was soon to die, Moses repeats to the people the law; he also gives them strong warnings against disobedience. He prefaces his repetition of the law with these words: "And now, O Israel, hearken unto the statutes and unto the ordinances, which I teach you, to do them; that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which Jehovah, the God of your fathers, giveth you. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you Behold, I have taught you statutes and ordinances, even as Jehovah my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the midst of the land whither ye go in to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, that shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. . . . Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes saw, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; but make them known unto thy children and thy children's children." (Deut. 4:1-9.) These preliminary statements continue to the close of chapter 4. In the study of these lessons concerning Israel, it is worthy of note that Jehovah often repeated his promise to give them the land of Canaan. Yet the book of Joshua shows that they had to carry on long wars to come into the possession of the land which was given to them. This shows that, even though a thing is a gift, we must do our part in order to come into possession of it. That salvation is conditional does not make it any the less a gift. Nothing we do pays God for what we get. Every good gift is from God, even our daily bread for which we work is given to us. (Matt. 6:11; James 1:17.) A condition is not a payment. A thing would not be a gift if you paid God in full for what you receive from him. There is therefore a wide difference between performing conditions and paying in full for what you receive.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON**Israel's Prosperity Conditional (Verses 13-15)**

The phrase, "a land flowing with milk and honey," is of course a figure of speech, showing the abundance of the products of the land. Centuries of tillage and erosion have greatly reduced the fertility of much of the land. Someone who in recent years visited that land tried to make the Old Testament statements about the land false, on the grounds that so much of it is not now very productive. He should have known better than to judge the land then by what it is now. Even in as new a country as the United States, there are many once fertile fields that are now practically worthless. But for these children of Israel the Lord would exercise special oversight over the land. He would not bless them with abundant harvests if they disobeyed him. "If ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love Jehovah your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul" that was the condition on which he would give the land rain in its season, "the former rain and the latter rain." It is said that there are about seven months in the warm season in which there is practically no rain. "The autumnal rains usually commence at the latter end of October, or beginning of November, not suddenly, but by degrees; which gives opportunity to the husbandman to sow his wheat and barley During the months of November and December the rains continue to fall heavily; afterwards they return at longer intervals, and are not so heavy; but at no period during the winter do they entirely cease to occur. Rain continues to fall more or less during the month of March, but is afterwards very rare."—Bible Encyclopedia. It seems that rain at harvest was no more expected than snow in the summer. (Prov. 26:1.) To the Hebrew rain at harvest was a miracle. (1 Sam. 12:17.) The former, or earlier, rain made it possible for them to sow their seed; the absence of rain at harvest-time made it possible to harvest without loss of their grain. Jehovah would give the rains in the regular season—"that thou mayest gather in thy grain, and thy new wine, and thine oil."

Warnings Against Serving Other Gods (Verses 16, 17)

Many people are deceived into doing wrong things; many times they are not deceived as to what God says, but deceived into believing that some other way is as good, or even better. No Hebrew was deceived into the notion that Jehovah authorized them to worship idols. He had spoken so plainly and so often against the worship of idols that they could not have been mistaken as to what he said; yet Jehovah said to them, "Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them." All lands then had their own peculiar god, or gods. These Hebrews might be deceived into thinking that a certain god or certain gods ruled in the land of Canaan, and they might be deceived into thinking that it was better to worship the gods of the nations who then occupied that land. Their ideas of Jehovah could not have been very highly developed, nor firmly fixed, or there would have been no need of so much warning against their falling into idolatry. Their history in the promised land shows that they frequently went after the gods of the nations about them. And yet Jehovah had plainly said, if they went after idols, the anger of

Jehovah would be kindled against them, and the land would not yield its fruit, and that they would quickly perish "from off the good land which Jehovah giveth you." Jehovah had said, in Deut. 4:25, 26, "When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have been long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image in the form of anything, and shall do that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah thy God, to provoke him to anger; I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over the Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed."

How They Should Treat Jehovah's Words (Verses 18-20)

"Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul." This means more than merely to memorize them; it means that they were to so cherish them in their heart as to make them their way of life, their philosophy of life. The one who does not love the word of God does not love God; for to love God is to love all that pertains to him and all that comes from him. Learn a lesson from David's devotion to the word of Jehovah: "The fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring for ever: the ordinances of Jehovah are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the droppings of the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: In keeping them there is great reward." (Psalm 19:9-11.) "Oil how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day." (Psalm 119:97.) It is doubtful that the expression, "and ye shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes," is to be taken literally. It is true that, in the days of Jesus on earth, the Pharisees, who loved to make a show of their religion, applied it literally. (See Matt. 23:5.) On this point McGarvey remarks, "Phylacteries were pieces of parchment with certain portions of the law written on them, and worn usually on the sleeve of the left arm, though sometimes on the forehead, and sometimes on the breast. The authority for wearing them was entirely traditionary, the tradition having its origin in a literal interpretation of Ex. 13:9, 16 and Deut. 11:18-21." Jehovah's words were to guide their hands and light up theft pathway. And they were to teach them to their children; they were to be the topic of conversation morning and night. They were to make their homes religious homes. Family life was to have a definite meaning; Jehovah's words were to have chief place in their conversations in the home; and not only in the home, but also when they walked by the way. They were not to leave their religion at home when they traveled. So many church members throw off all restraints when they are in places where they are not known; it is a great evil, and shows that the opinion of their neighbors—not the words of God—is the restraining influence with them. They serve their neighbors' opinions, and not God.

The Extent of Their Promised Possessions (Verses 21-25)

If the children of Israel would be diligent in obeying and teaching the commandments of Jehovah, their lives would be prolonged in the land which they were to possess. Sober living prolongs life. Dili-

gence in keeping the commandment of Jehovah was emphasized; success in any worth-while undertaking requires diligence. They could not go about serving God in a haphazard, hit or miss way, and succeed in gaining God's promises. They had to walk in his ways, and not in ways of their own choosing; only God's way was a good way. They were to cleave unto him—glue themselves to him. Such fidelity is as necessary now as then. "Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure." (2 Pet. 1:10.) On condition that they would give him wholehearted obedience, Jehovah said, "Then will Jehovah drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourselves. Every place whereon the sole of your foot shall tread shall be yours." The territory here mentioned was bounded on the east by the Euphrates River, on the north by Lebanon, on the west by the Mediterranean Sea, and on the south by the wilderness. Not till the days of Solomon did they have all this territory under their control. (1 Kings 4:21; 2 Chron. 9:26.) They were really promised all the lands they could conquer and possess: "Every place whereon the sole of your foot shall tread shall be yours." To encourage them Jehovah said, "There shall no man be able to stand before you: Jehovah your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon."

SOME REFLECTIONS

Can God's people fall away from God's favor, and perish? Many redeemed from bondage in Egypt perished in the wilderness, and Paul tells us that they are examples to us. And we are warned not to lust after evil things as they did. (1 Cor. 10:1-12.)

If you give full value for what you receive, it is not a gift; but if a good neighbor says, "Come over, and I will give you a good supply of vegetables," your performing the required condition does not make it any the less a gift. If there were any way for you to pay God full value for salvation, then salvation would not be a gift; but you pay him nothing. The conditions you perform do not enrich him in the least degree. It is a great pity—really a calamity—that many religious teachers have not learned these simple truths. Think this matter out, and see.

There is too much idolatry even among civilized people. The superstition about signs and omens is a species of idolatry. A heathen man makes a little image, and depends on it to give him good luck; you put a horseshoe over the door for luck. Wherein is he an idolater and you are not? There is no power in the idol to bring good fortune, nor is there in a horseshoe; neither is there any power in the fact that a black cat crosses your road, to bring misfortune. We should get over such relics of idolatry.

But it is good to trust in God, and do his will. He is good, powerful, and wise, and "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." (Eph. 3:20.) "Blessed is the man that trusteth in Jehovah, and whose trust Jehovah is." (Jer. 17:7.)

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Salvation a gift, and yet conditional.
 The folly of superstition.
 The evils of disobedience.
 Obedience and its blessings.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.
 What is the meaning of the word Deuteronomy?
 When Moses repeated the law, how long had it been since the law was first announced at Sinai?
 Give some historic facts that occurred about this time.
 Give some things Moses said as a preface to his repetition of the law.
 Discuss conditions in gifts.

Verses 15-15

Why would the present condition of the land in Canaan be different from what it then was?
 When were the rainy and the dry seasons?

Verses 16, 17

What is said about idols?
 Why might Israel be easily deceived?
 What would be the results if they went after other gods?

Verses 18-20

What did he exhort them to do with the words of Jehovah?
 Repeat Psalm 19:9-11.
 What place did he require his words to have in their lives?

Verses 21-25

What did Jehovah promise Israel, and on what conditions?
 Repeat 2 Pet. 1:10.
 What territory might they occupy?
 When did they occupy all this promised territory?
 What encouraging words did he speak to them?
 Discuss the reflections.

MAP LINK

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FOURTH QUARTER**THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS**

AIM: To help the student interpret the ten commandments in the light of the teachings of Jesus and to apply them in personal and social relationships.

Lesson I—October 3, 1943

JESUS AND THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Matt. 5:17-20; 19:16-22; John 5:39, 40

17 Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil.

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished.

19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

16 And behold, one came to him and said, Teacher, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

17 And he said unto him, Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good: but if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments.

18 He saith unto him, Which? And Jesus said, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness.

19 Honor thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I observed: what lack I yet?

21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

22 But when the young man heard the saying, he went away sorrowful; for he was one that had great possessions.

39 Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me;

40 And ye will not come to me, that ye may have life.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill." (Matt. 5:17.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 7:21-27.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

September	27.	M	Jesus and the Law (Matt. 5:17-20)
September	28.	T	Divine Requirements (Matt. 19:16-22)
September	29.	W	The Lawgiver (Ex. 34:29-35)
September	30.	T	Knowing the Law (Psalm 119:33-40)
October	1.	F	The Law in the Heart (Isa. 51:4-8)
October	2.	S	Keeping the Law (John 15:12-17)
October	3.	S	The Test of Service (Matt. 7:21-27)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For Matt. 5:17-20 and John 5:39, 40, probably A.D. 27 or 28; for Matt. 19:16-22, probably A.D. 30.

Places.—A mountain in Galilee; Petrea, beyond the Jordan River; Jerusalem.

Persons.—Jesus, his disciples, a rich young ruler, and the authorities in Jerusalem.

Lesson Links.—One thing that people are slow to learn—a thing that they must learn to correctly understand the Bible—is that the whole Jewish economy ended at the cross of Christ, and a new order became effective. Long before the coming of Christ it was written: "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.) To see that this new covenant became of force after Christ died, read Heb. 8; 9:11-16; 10:9, 10. The ten commandments were a part of that old covenant which was taken away. (See also 2 Cor. 3:4-18; Eph. 2:14-18; Col. 2:8-15.) The authority in this new covenant is vested in Christ. Said he, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." (Matt. 28:18.) "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." (Col. 1:18.) When God raised him 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.) Hence we are to hear him, and none else. At the transfiguration, as Moses and Elijah significantly left the scene, God said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (Matt. 17:1-5.)

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON**Not to Destroy, But to Fulfill (Verses 17, 18)**

Jesus lived under the law, and obeyed all its requirements. The Jews held tenaciously to the tradition of the elders, but Jesus utterly disregarded these human additions to the law. Jesus was born under the law, grew up under the law of Moses, and so faithfully obeyed all its requirements that he could challenge the Jews to convince or convict him of sin. (John 8:46.) Instead of verses 17 and 18 showing that the law was to be of permanent force, they show that it had a limit. The contrast is between destroying and fulfilling.

Jesus would not destroy the law, but would fulfill it; and not one thing about it would pass away, till all this was accomplished. It would then cease by its own limitations. It was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. (Gal. 3:23-25.) When a schoolmaster accomplishes his work, the student passes out from under him. So with the law. The law had its types and shadows pointing to Christ he fulfilled them. No one had perfectly fulfilled its righteous demands, but Jesus fulfilled its demands to the fullest extent. Having fulfilled the law, he took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross. (Col. 2:14.)

Obedience Required Under the Law (Verses 19, 20)

God's commands are expressions of his authority and of his interest in us; they grow also out of our need for guidance. They are signboards, showing us the right road. To the Jew the commands of the law were guides to prosperity and peace. God knew the right way for them to go, and he graciously gave them the right directions in his commands; but, strange though it be, human beings have always had a tendency to pass judgment on God's commands, esteeming some commands more important than others. In these days they have gone even farther, and pronounced some of God's commands nonessential; virtually they have taken down some of God's highway signs! The scribes and Pharisees had graded God's commands, pronouncing some greater, and some less, than others. Here Jesus teaches a lesson based on their own rating. The command that they considered least must not be broken, nor must they teach others to do so. They must be faithful in obeying and in teaching every command. Jesus emphasizes the need of doing everything God commands, as all professed servants of God should do. No approved servant of God ever spoke lightly of any of God's commands, nor ever gave countenance to any who did. All obedience must come from the heart. (Rom. 6:17, 18.) Herein the scribes and the Pharisees failed; their religion was outward and formal. (Read Matt. 23:23-28.) Said Jesus to them, "Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." They tithed the products of their gardens, which was right; but they neglected "the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith." They were unjust in their dealings, unmerciful to those who did not suit their notions, and their religion was a form without faith. "Ye blind guides, that strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel!" And yet they put themselves forward as models of righteousness, and the people generally so regarded them. Jesus taught the people that their righteousness must exceed even their estimate of the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees, or they could not enter into the kingdom of heaven. These words of Jesus show plainly that entrance into the kingdom is conditional.

The Great Question (Matt. 19:16)

To get the full lesson of this incident read also Mark 10:17-30 and Luke 18:18-30. Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, traveling down the east side of the river Jordan. A rich young ruler ran to him; he did not want to miss this opportunity to get an answer to his great question. There was much in the character of this young

ruler to admire. He showed a marked degree of humility, and respect for Jesus as teacher. "Teacher, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" The only source of information he had concerning eternal life was what we now term the Old Testament, and eternal life is not very prominently set forth in that portion of the scriptures; yet many of the Old Testament worthies expected a life beyond death. (Heb. 11:10, 16.) And Job said, "And after my skin, even this body, is destroyed, then without my flesh shall I see God." (Job. 19:26.) And Daniel says some shall awake to eternal life. (Dan. 12:2.) This young ruler knew of eternal life, and desired to possess it; and he knew that he must do something to possess it. Jesus did not contradict that idea, but proceeded to tell him what to do. And while studying the answer Jesus gave, we must remember that the law of Moses was still in force.

Jesus Tells the Young Ruler What to Do (Verses 17-19)

The young man had asked Jesus a plain question, and Jesus gave him a plain answer: "If thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments." The young man regarded eternal life as an inheritance (Mark 10:17), but he knew also that there was something he had to do to come into that inheritance. Jesus informed him that his inheriting eternal life depended on his keeping the commandments. The young man evidently thought some commandments were essential, but some were not; for he asked, "Which?" Jesus repeats five of the ten commandments, the commandments that have to do with man's relations to man; and then repeats one commandment that is not found in the ten commandments: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This young man was likely no more than a ruler in a synagogue; as such he would be very strict in observing that which related directly to his attitude toward God and the Sabbath. Jesus repeated only those commandments which the average Pharisee would be most likely to neglect. Obedience to the law of Moses was required so long as it was in force. Peter calls the law of Moses a yoke, "which," said he, "neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." (Acts 15:10.) Yet there is need that we obey faithfully the commands of the new covenant. Jesus is the author of salvation to all who obey him. (Heb. 5:8, 9.)

Jesus Loved and Tested Him (Verses 20, 21)

"All these things have I observed: what lack I yet?" He had been carefully taught, and had kept himself under excellent discipline. There is no reason for doubting his sincerity and truthfulness. Mark adds, "And Jesus looking upon him loved him." He was an excellent character, but he was not perfect. How much did he want eternal life? The young man himself would not know till he was thoroughly tested. If he desired heavenly treasures more than those of earth, if he would give up all and follow Jesus, Jesus would bless him in the highest degree. The young man, though a strict observer of the law, felt that he lacked something, but he had not yet been put to the test. Mark reports Jesus as saying, "One thing thou lackest." That should have been encouraging to him. "If thou wouldest be perfect." Perfection is the standard to strive for, even though we fall short of it every day. "Sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in

heaven." Instead of thinking about what Jesus required, he should have thought more about what he offered. His riches, though great, were not worthy to be compared with the inexhaustible riches of eternal life. "And come, follow me." Jesus wanted such an excellent young man in the company of his personal followers. His energy, integrity, and ability would have gone far in the service of Christ, had he, like Paul, been willing to say, "Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ." (Phil. 3:7, 8.)

His Riches Were Dearer to Him Than Eternal Life (Verse 22)

The young man could not stand the test, and went away sorrowful. He wanted eternal life, but he wanted his riches more. Abraham was tested to the limit when Jehovah commanded him to offer up Isaac; but when Jehovah saw that Abraham would not falter, he stayed his hand. It might have been so in this case had the young man promptly agreed to sell all he had.

Christ Jesus Gives Life (John 5:39, 40)

The Old Testament scriptures were the scriptures they searched, for the New Testament had not then been written—the Old Testament was then still in force. There was not much they could learn about eternal life in the scriptures they searched. But their study of these scriptures should have led them to believe in Christ. Searching these scriptures led many of the Bereans to believe in Christ. (Acts 17:10-12.) If the extreme advocates of unconditional predestination and election had been right in their contention that these Jews merely thought they had eternal life in the scriptures, that would not at all militate against the necessity of searching the New Testament scriptures for the way to eternal life. The source of life is Christ, and we learn of him in the scriptures. These Jews would not come to him that they might have life.

SOME REFLECTIONS

When a man becomes so wise in his own conceits, or so perverted in his thinking, that he can boldly pronounce some of God's commands nonessential, he is a dangerous man to have in any community. God never did regard such men as his servants; neither should we.

One of the strange things in religious matters is the tenacity with which people hold to the ten commandments as their standard of morals. A little reflection will show anyone that they do not constitute a perfect code of morals. You cannot build a perfect code of morals on a string of negatives. Those that have to do with man's relation to man are negative, unless we include in this list the fifth commandment.

Riches within themselves are not an evil; but people often become slaves to wealth, and that is an evil. Even a good man may become so interested in material things that he forgets to regard the interests of his soul. A desire to be rich leads to many evils. "But they that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many

foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. (1 Tim. 6:9.)

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The need of obedience.
How some discredit obedience.
The dangers of seeking to become rich.
The need of searching the scriptures.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

What question did he ask?
How had he learned of eternal life?

Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
Discuss Jer. 31:31-34.
Show that a new covenant was made, and that the old covenant ended at the cross.
Under whose authority are we?
Give reason for your answer.

Verses 17-19

What answer did Jesus give?
What did the young man then ask, and what did his question imply?
What commandments did Jesus repeat, and which was not one of the ten?

Verses 17, 18

Discuss these verses.

Verses 20, 21

What did the young man then say?
What test did Jesus put to him?
Discuss these things.
Contrast the young man's attitude with Paul's regarding worldly goods.

Verses 19, 20

Show that the law of Moses required obedience.
Show that the commands of the law were highway signs to prosperity.
Discuss the Pharisees.

Verse 22

Discuss this verse.

Matt. 19:16

Discuss the standing of the man who came to Jesus with a question.

John 5:39, 40

Discuss these verses.
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson II—October 10, 1943

REVERENCE FOR GOD

Ex. 20:3-7; Matt. 4:10; 6:9; John 4:23, 24

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me,

6 And showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

7 Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain; for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers.

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

GOLDEN TEXT—"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:24.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 4:21-26.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

October 4.	M	Reverence for God (Ex. 20:1-7)
October 5.	T	Moses' Reverence for God (Ex. 3:1-6)
October 6.	W	Daniel's Reverence for God (Dan. 2:19-23)
October 7.	T	The Sovereignty of God (Acts 17:24-29)
October 8.	F	The Majesty of God (Psalm 99:1-9)
October 9.	S	"Swear Not at All" (Matt. 5:33-37)
October 10.	S	God Is a Spirit (John 4:21-26)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For Exodus 20:3-7, probably 1491 B.C.; for Matt. 4:10; 6:9; John 4:23, 24, probably A.D. 27 or 28.

Places.—Sinai, a mountain in Galilee, and Sychar in Samaria.

Persons.—Jehovah, the whole nation of Israel, Jesus, his disciples, the multitudes, and a Samaritan woman of Sychar.

Lesson Links.—It has been said that man is incurably religious. It seems so, for all nations and peoples have some kind of religion. Because of this inherent trait of human beings, nations who have no revelation, or who have abandoned revealed religion, have invented religions of their own and gods of their own. In the very nature of things they must attribute to their gods traits and temperaments similar to their own. It is said that cultured Athens had thousands of gods. It was a very religious city. Paul said to them, "For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you." (Acts 17:23.) No man by studying the seemingly conflicting forces of nature could arrive at the idea that there is but one God. "The world through its wisdom knew not God." (1 Cor. 1:21.) Only through revelation can we learn that God is one, and besides him there is none other. To those who recognize that there is one God, "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork." (Psalm 19:1.) Many people are controlled almost exclusively by their surroundings and associates. It is certain that the mass of the children of Israel worshiped idols, or the gods of the Egyptians, while they were in Egypt. Nearly fifty years after they' left Egypt Joshua said to them, "Now therefore fear Jehovah, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt; and serve ye Jehovah." (Josh. 24:14.) This language shows that not all the children of Israel had abandoned the gods of Egypt, and that was spoken near the end of Joshua's life.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The First of the Ten Commandments (Verse 3)

If we take into consideration the state of religious thought of that day, we should not be surprised at the frequency with which Jehovah identified himself to the children of Israel. They had been greatly under the influence of the idolatry of Egypt. They needed to be frequently reminded that Jehovah was the God who brought them out of Egypt. It would serve to impress them with the idea that

Jehovah was more powerful than Pharaoh and all the gods of Egypt; and that Jehovah was able to do for them whatever he promised to do. It seems that there were some among the children of Israel all the while that believed in Jehovah, but the masses were densely ignorant. It required mighty demonstrations to convince the masses that Jehovah was the God of might and power, greater than all other gods. They saw the wonders he performed in Egypt, and at the Red Sea, and along the route to Sinai; and there were awe-inspiring demonstrations on Sinai before Jehovah spoke the ten commandments. "And it came to pass on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud; and all the people that were in the camp trembled." (Ex. 19:16.) "And mount Sinai, the whole of it, smoked, because Jehovah descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly." (Ex. 19:18.) "And so fearful was the appearance, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake." (Heb. 12:21.) And in the midst of all these demonstrations Jehovah spoke from the mount, saying, "I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Such scenes would create in the people reverential fear, and the language would remind them that, as Jehovah had been so good to them as to lead them out of the cruel bondage of Egypt, he would continue to lead them for their good. Jehovah was their God even in this strange land. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." This first of the ten commandments is therefore a negative commandment, a prohibitive commandment, as are all the others excepting the fourth and the fifth. In effect the fourth is prohibitive, for God says of the Sabbath, "In it thou shalt not do any work."

Against Making Images to Worship (Verses 4-6)

People may worship false gods, and yet make no images. They may worship the heavenly bodies, and even animals. The first command prohibits such worship. In these days some make reason, their own reason, their god; to them it is the infallible test of all things. And some make their own conscience their god, without knowing what conscience is or its office. And some serve and trust wealth. The second commandment prohibits the making of images as objects of worship, or as representatives of that which is worshiped. This command does not prohibit the making of pictures and models for other purposes. The plan of the tabernacle shows that pictures and images may be used as ornaments. Note the two cherubim of pure gold on the mercy seat (Ex. 25:10-22), the images of flowers on the candlestick (25:31-40), and the cherubim worked into the veil of the tabernacle (26:31-35). Such passages as Lev. 26:1, Deut. 4:15-19, and 27:15, show that the second commandment related solely to the making of images for purposes of worship, or as objects of worship. It seems that only a person of low intelligence could imagine that he could with his own hands make a god that could take care of him. To see how ridiculous inspired prophets make such procedure read Isa. 44:9-17 and Jer. 10:3-5. And yet are we not sometimes as foolish? Some otherwise intelligent people will place a horseshoe over the door for good luck, and some will

carry a rabbit-foot in the pocket for the same purpose! That is just another form of idolatry. Trust in God!

Against Taking the Name of God in Vain (Verse 7)

God's name must be held in reverence; it must not be spoken in a light, foolish, or frivolous way. To give false testimony under oath was, and even now is, to take the name of God in vain. "And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, and profane the name of thy God: I am Jehovah." (Lev. 19:12.) Of course the commandment which we are now studying was given to the children of Israel, but reverence for God has always been essential to acceptable obedience. "But speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine: . . . that aged women likewise be reverent in demeanor." (Tit. 2:1-3.) "Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: for our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. 12:28, 29.) Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." (Matt. 6:9.) This is a petition that God's name be set apart and held sacred above all other names. It is as true now as it ever was, that to give false testimony under oath is to take the name of God in vain; and yet that sort of thing is so common that little attention is paid to it, and yet it is a sort of compounding of sins. In giving false testimony under oath three sins are committed: a lie is told, justice is perverted, and the name of God is blasphemed. The name of God is also profaned when it is used as a byword in common conversation. And to use the name of God in all sorts of ugly speech is to take his name in vain. When "the son of the Israelitish woman blasphemed the Name, and cursed," he was stoned to death. (Lev. 24:10-23.) And that became the penalty for all that blasphemed the name of Jehovah, "as well for the sojourner, as for the home-born." Reverence for Jehovah leads one to have a wholesome respect for everything that pertains to Jehovah. That characteristic was highly developed in David. Though he slew many other men, he would not slay Saul because Saul was the Lord's anointed. (1 Sam. 24:6, 10; 26:9-11.) We should have as much reverence as did David; and this reverence should keep us from speaking disrespectfully of the Lord's church, and also from using God's name and his holy scriptures in light jokes.

Worship God and Revere His Name (Matt. 4:10; 6:9)

The devil tempted Jesus, but that does not mean that he stirred up in the heart of Jesus any evil desires, or any inclination to do what the devil suggested. If he had stirred up in Jesus any evil thoughts, these evil thoughts would have been a sin. To try to induce a person to do wrong is to tempt him, even though not the least inclination is stirred up in him to do wrong. And yet it has been argued that the devil did stir up in Jesus evil inclinations, else he was not tempted; but that shows a lack of understanding as to what temptation is. Besides, it is a reflection on the purity of Jesus to think he ever had evil desires stirred up in him. When the devil took Jesus "unto an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me," Jesus knew the devil was lying; for the devil did not possess

in his own right anything in heaven or on earth. He therefore had none of these things to give. Jesus immediately replied, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." All that the devil has on earth he gained by conquest, and not by right. But even had the devil owned the kingdoms in his own right, it would have been a sin to worship him. Should one worship the father of lies and of all that is evil? The devil seeks servants that he may enslave them. Only deity is worthy of our worship. Jesus connects worship and service so closely that no one can separate them. Worship is the broader term, for there must be an element of worship in all acceptable service. Praying is worship, but it can hardly be called service. Matt. 6:9 is a petition that God's name be revered and exalted throughout the whole earth. It is a great sin to speak the name of God insincerely. Let his name be magnified in all the earth.

True Worshipers (John 4:23, 24)

A true worshiper is one who worships in spirit and truth. The Father seeks that kind of worshipers. There would be no true worshipers if there was no true worship. The Athenians were not true worshipers. (Acts 17:23.) If a man's religion is vain, so is his worship. (James 1:26.) "In vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men." (Matt. 15:9.) Vain worship is empty, worthless, and so is will-worship. (Col. 2:23.) It has no value. True worship is the only kind of worship that avails anything. True worship is worship in spirit and truth; it comes from the heart and is rendered according to the truth. Paul expressed a similar thought: "For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son." (Rom. 1:9.) Joshua exhorted Israel: "Now therefore fear Jehovah, and serve him in sincerity and in truth." There is danger that all worship degenerate into a mere formality; such worship is mere flattery, and flattery is lying. "But they flattered him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongue. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they faithful in his covenant." Concerning them Jehovah said to Ezekiel, "And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but do them not; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their gain." (Ezek. 33:31.) Here is what Jesus says to such people: "Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." (Matt. 15:7, 8.) If a man is really sincere, he will seek to worship God in truth—according to truth. If a worshiper does not want to do what God says, he is not sincere. And a man does not worship in truth, if he worships in ignorance, as did the Athenians. To Ezekiel Jehovah said concerning Israel, "Her priests have done violence to my law, and have profaned my holy things." He then immediately explains how they had done so; they had made no distinction between the holy and the common—made no distinction between what he ordained and what they invented. To mix man's inventions in worship with divine requirements is to make the whole worship or service common. Illustration: It would profane the Lord's Supper for you to put some foods you like on the Lord's table as a part of the Lord's Supper.

SOME REFLECTIONS

"Take time to be holy"—take time to meditate on the majesty, power, and glory of Jehovah. Take time to think of his goodness and of your dependence upon him. Such exercise will increase your reverence.

"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!" (Rom. 11:33.) "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever." (Rev. 7:12.)

"Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore." (Jude 24, 25.)

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The evils of profanity.
Forms of idolatry in this country.
Vain worship.
True worship.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
What do you think gives rise to the worship of idols?
Why cannot people know God by the study of nature?

Verse 3

Why did Jehovah so often remind Israel that he was their God?
Name the mighty works they had seen before the ten commandments were given.
Repeat the first commandment.

Verses 4-6

What false gods might the people worship without making images?
What does the second commandment prohibit?
Read and comment on Isa. 44:9-17.

Verse 7

Repeat the commandment of verse 7.
What does it prohibit?
Give New Testament teaching on reverence.
Name the sins of giving false testimony under oath.
What was the Old Testament penalty for blasphemy?

Matt. 4:10; 6:9

Name the temptations the devil placed before Jesus.
What great offer did he make Jesus?
Were all these things his to give?
What reply did Jesus make?

John 4:23, 24

Repeat John 4:23, 24.
What is true worship, and what is vain worship?
Give a full discussion of worshiping in spirit and truth.
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson III—October 17, 1943

JESUS AND THE SABBATH

Ex. 20:8-11; Isa. 58:13, 14; Mark 2:23 to 3:6

8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work;

10 But the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor the cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

11 For in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

13 If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, and the holy of Jehovah

honorable; and shalt honor it, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

14 Then shalt thou delight thyself in Jehovah; and I will make thee to ride upon the high places of the earth; and I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GOLDEN TEXT—"And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." (Mark 2:27.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 1.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

October 11.	M	The Day of Rest (Ex. 20:8-11)
October 12.	T	The Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:23 to 3:6)
October 13.	W	A Holy Day (Isa. 58:13, 14)
October 14.	T	Keeping the Day of Rest (Ex. 16:21-30)
October 15.	F	Jesus Healing on the Sabbath (Luke 13:10-17)
October 16.	S	Warnings Against Sabbath Desecration (Jer. 17:24-27)
October 17.	S	A Day for Worship (Psalm 84:1-4)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For Exodus 20:8-11, about 1491 B.C.; for Isa. 58:13, 14, probably between 735 B.C. and 713 B.C.; for Mark 2:23 to 3:6, probably A.D. 28 or early part of 29.

Places.—Sinai, Jerusalem, and Galilee.

Persons.—Jehovah, the children of Israel, Isaiah, Jesus, and the Pharisees.

Lesson Links.—There is no evidence that the Sabbath law was in existence before the children of Israel came out of Egypt. If the Sabbath law had been in force before that time, these people could not have observed it while they were slaves in a heathen land. Certainly no heathen nation would have respected such a law. All this means that no one kept the Sabbath before this time. The Sabbath law was given to the children of Israel, and to no one else. "Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments, and madest known unto them thy holy sabbath." (Neh. 9:13, 14.) This shows plainly that the children of Israel knew nothing about the Sabbath till after they

left Egypt. "And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm: therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day." (Deut. 5:15.) He did not therefore command them to keep the Sabbath before he brought them out of Egypt. But a short time before Moses died he repeated the law to the people of Israel, because those living at that time were under twenty years of age when the law was given at Sinai, forty years before this repetition of the law as recorded in the book of Deuteronomy. As a preface to his repeating the ten commandments he said, "Jehovah our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. Jehovah made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." (Deut. 5:2, 3.) These fathers would be Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and especially Jacob's sons, the heads of the tribes of Israel; this covenant, the ten commandments, was not made with them, but at Horeb, "but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." This covenant, the ten commandments, was therefore made at Horeb, or Sinai, with Israel, and with no one else. Note this: "Verily ye shall keep my sabbaths: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am Jehovah who sanctifieth you." "It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever." (Ex. 31:13, 17). If the Sabbath law had been of universal application, a law for all nations, it could not have been a sign between Jehovah and any certain people.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Law of the Sabbath (Verses 8-11)

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." This is not all there is to the Sabbath law; there were penalties for a violation of the Sabbath law. There is no reason for concluding that the command, "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work," required them to work every day between one Sabbath and the next; all the work they did was to be done during the six days. The Sabbath law was really a prohibitive law; "in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates." They were to engage in no profitable work on the Sabbath; it was a Sabbath unto God. It was a stringent law: "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day." (Ex. 35:3.) The ten commandments as first announced contained no penalties for violations. In governmental affairs a law without a penalty is not enforceable, and is therefore in reality not a law. Such a law is no more than advice or recommendations to do the thing named. Penalties were announced later. "Six days shall work be done; but on the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a sabbath of solemn rest to Jehovah: whosoever doeth any work therein shall be put to death." (Ex. 35:2.) For an example of the way the Sabbath law was enforced read Num. 15:32-36. A man was found gathering up sticks on the Sabbath day, and Jehovah ordered that he be stoned to death.

Rewards for Keeping the Sabbath (Isa. 58:13, 14)

Leeser's translation makes the first clause of verse 13 plainer: "If thou restrain thy foot for the sake of the sabbath." They were

not to go about their own business on the Sabbath day; it was to be a day of delight—a day of rest from their daily grind of work and business. They were not to do things for their own profit, nor spend the day seeking pleasure. It was not to be a day of gossip—"nor speaking thine own words." In later years the Jews developed the synagogue system of worship and teaching. In these gatherings they spent a part of the Sabbath. The Sabbath law was a positive law; it was not based on any moral principles, as were the commands against lying, stealing, etc. The Sabbath law, being a positive law, tested the Hebrew's willingness to submit to the authority of God. He had no other reason for observing it. If therefore he would keep the Sabbath, Jehovah would bless him, and cause him to enjoy the heritage of Jacob, that is, the land in which they dwelt.

The Pharisees Question Jesus (Mark 2:23, 24)

The roads passing through the fields were not separated from the tilled land by fences; so it was an easy matter for the disciples, "as they went, to pluck the ears." Luke says, "His disciples plucked the ears, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands." The Pharisees, always looking for something for which to criticize Jesus, asked, "Why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?" Their complaint was that the disciples were breaking the Sabbath law. They would not have objected to what the disciples were doing, had it been any other day of the week; for they knew that the law said, "When thou comest into thy neighbor's standing grain, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thy hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbor's standing grain." (Deut. 23:25.) There was nothing in the law of the Sabbath that condemned what the disciples were doing, but the Jews down through the centuries had added many definitions and limitations to all the requirements of the law. These additions were called the tradition of the elders. It would not have been lawful for them to harvest and thresh their grain on the Sabbath, but the Jews had so refined the law as to make plucking the ears a sort of reaping and rubbing out the grains as a sort of threshing. Hence the disciples were merely violating the tradition of the elders. Jesus respected the Sabbath law, but disregarded the tradition of the elders. He respected God's law, but disregarded man's additions to it.

Jesus Replies to the Pharisees (Verses 25-28)

"Did ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was hungry, he, and they that were with him?" This question was a rebuke to the Pharisees for their inconsistency in excusing David and condemning his disciples, and for their ignorance of the use to make of the law. David and those with him had eaten the showbread, "which it is not lawful to eat save for the priests." The imperative need overrode the plain law respecting the showbread. (The incident is recorded in 1 Sam. 21:1-6.) Did not the disciples have the same need that David had? Why, then, be so inconsistent as to excuse David and condemn the disciples? Besides, the disciples were not really violating the Sabbath law, but only the tradition of the elders; but Jesus did not raise this point—he answered his critics as if the disciples had really violated the Sabbath law as the Pharisees charged. "And he said unto them, The sabbath was made

for man, and not man for the sabbath." That is true of all the commands of God. There is not the slightest bit of truth in the notion that the Sabbath was changed from the seventh day to the first day of the week, yet in a sense the Lord's day serves a similar purpose. It is a day devoted to the Lord just as the Lord's Supper is a supper devoted to the Lord. The Lord's day should not be used as a common day, any more than the Lord's Supper should be used as a common meal.

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

It is very likely that the Pharisees put the man with the withered hand in a prominent place, so that Jesus would be sure to see him. The scribes and Pharisees were becoming more antagonistic toward Jesus. They could find no ground for legal action against him for what his disciples did in plucking the heads of grain. They had an idea that his sympathy for the unfortunate would lead him to heal the withered hand. In this they recognized both his goodness and his power; and so they watched him, that they might find grounds for accusing him. Their tradition, not the law, made it a crime to practice the healing art on the Sabbath. It seems that they feared that Jesus might not see the unfortunate man; and so, according to Matthew, they asked, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? that they might accuse him." But the healing was done in such a way that they could not even accuse Jesus of doing it. That every one might see plainly what was done, Jesus said to the man, "Stand forth." Jesus said to his enemies, "Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to kill?" It was a stunning question; for these men had come to do Jesus harm, to find in him a crime punishable by death. If Jesus healed the man, he would be doing a good deed, and saving a life to usefulness. Now, which is right? They could not answer him without condemning themselves; they had not expected such a trap. If they said it was right to do good on the Sabbath day, then they had no charge against Jesus if he healed the man; if they said it was wrong for him to do good on the Sabbath and right for them to do harm to a man, they would make out a worse case against themselves. It is no wonder that "they held their peace." Their hardness of heart grieved Jesus—even angered him. Jesus gazed at them for a time; and then, treating them as unworthy of attention, turned his attention to the man with the withered hand. To be thus ignored was a blow to their pride, and would further enrage them.

The Man Is Healed on the Sabbath (Verse 5)

"He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand." The man did what Jesus said; and, in so doing, he was healed. And so a good deed was done on the Sabbath; but who did it? Could they have proved that Jesus did it? They had their plans laid to bring action against Jesus, if he healed the man; but Jesus had managed the affairs in such way that they could prove nothing against him, even had it been wrong to heal on the Sabbath. He merely told the man to stretch forth his hand, and there was certainly no law against that. Not even their tradition condemned that. There was no way that they could prove that Jesus healed the man. He did not touch the man, nor did he say anything about healing him. They did not

know whence the power came that healed him. It was a case of their own setting—to find Jesus guilty of healing a man on the Sabbath; but he had evaded their trap, and had so managed affairs as to leave them in a bad light before the people. This further enraged them. Luke says, "They were filled with madness"—actually so enraged that they were put out of their senses. Their own carefully built-up scheme fell down on their own heads. They had set their trap for a public triumph over Jesus, and were publicly put to shame by their own scheme; they were caught in their own trap.

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

These Pharisees, having been put to shame before the people in their plan to find grounds for putting Jesus to death, now take counsel with the Herodians against Jesus, "how they might destroy him." They who had professed such high regard for the law now plot to commit murder in violation of the law, and they plot with their enemies. Like many men of today, they had no regard for the law, excepting when they could use it for their own purposes. Herodians were partisans of the Herods, and favored Roman rule. The Pharisees were bitter against what the Herodians favored. Now these groups of enemies unite in a murder scheme. They were united only in their hatred of Jesus. Hatred is a strange bond of union; but such unions are found even today among both religionists and politicians. Gospel preachers meet up with such combinations.

SOME REFLECTIONS

When men become wedded to a custom or a tradition, they will not even obey a command of God unless they can obey it according to custom or tradition. The Pharisees made void the commands of God that they might keep their traditions. (Mark 7:8, 9.) Religionists in many cases will do the same today.

Loyalty to the whole law of God is commendable, but extreme loyalty to certain requirements may become fanatical and cruel. It was true of the Pharisees. They would care for their stock on the Sabbath, but would allow no effort to relieve human suffering on the Sabbath. When a man's religion makes him fanatical and cruel, he should know that there is something wrong with his religion.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

What the Sabbath law required.
To whom was the Sabbath law given?
Is the Sabbath law still in force?

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the sign?
Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
To whom was the Sabbath law given?
Give proof.
What shows that the Hebrews knew nothing of the Sabbath before leaving Egypt.
Show that they were not commanded to keep the Sabbath before they left Egypt,

Discuss Deut. 5:2, 3.

What was the significance of the Sabbath as a

Verses 8-11

Give the law of the Sabbath, and the penalties for its violation.

Isa. 58:13, 14

Discuss these verses.

Mark 2:23, 24

What question did the Pharisees ask Jesus, and why?

Why did they think the disciples were doing an unlawful thing?
What were the disciples really violating?

Verses 25-28

What answer did Jesus make to the Pharisees?
Why is any law made?
Discuss the significance of the names, "Lord's day" and "Lord's Supper."

Mark 3:1-4

Lesson IV—October 24, 1943

HONORING OUR PARENTS

Ex. 20:12; Luke 2:48-51; Mark 7:6-13; John 19:25-27

12 Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee.

48 And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing.

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

6 And he said unto them, Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,
This people honoreth me with their lips,
But their heart is far from me.

7 But in vain do they worship me,
Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.

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

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

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

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

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

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

25 These things therefore the soldiers did. But there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalen.

26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold, thy son!

27 Then saith he to the disciple,]Behold, thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." (Eph. 6:1.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Prov. 4:10-18.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

October 18. M
October 19. T
October 20. W
October 21. T
October 22. F
October 23. S
October 24. S

Honoring Our Parents (Eph. 6:1-4)
Mutual Love in the Home (Col. 3:12-21)
A Father's Prayer for His Son (1 Chron. 29:16-19)
Piety in the Home (1 Tim. 5:1-4)
Jesus a Model Son (Luke 2:41-51)
Jesus' Care for His Mother (John 19:23-27)
Parental Instruction (Prov. 1:7-16)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For Ex. 20:12, about 1491 B.C.; for Luke 2:48-51, probably A.D. 8; for Mark 7:6-13, probably A.D. 29; for John 19:25-27, A.D. 30 or 31.

Places.—Sinai, Jerusalem, and Capernaum.

Persons.—Jehovah, the Hebrews, Jesus, the doctors of the law in Jerusalem, the Pharisees, the mother of Jesus, and John.

Lesson Links.—The family was ordained of God at the very beginning of the human race. He did not turn men and women loose to mix promiscuously, as he did all the lower orders of animate creatures. A male and a female were to be joined to make a definite unit. "And there came unto him Pharisees, trying him, and saying, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said, Have ye not read, that he who made them from the beginning made them [a] male and [a] female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh? So that they are no more two, but one flesh." (Matt. 19:3-6.) Children were therefore to have a home and the care of father and mother. The wholesome influence of the social life of the family in the home would be beneficial to the children, and also to the parents. Every unit composed of human beings must have a head, a governor; the family is no exception. "Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the saviour of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it." He so loved the church that he sacrificed himself for it. "Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies." (Eph. 5:22-28.) A home where these principles reign is a suitable home for the training of children. Children can respect parents of that sort; it requires no effort for them to do so. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." (Eph. 6:1.) How beautiful and attractive is a home where all these precepts have full force!

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON**"Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother" (Verse 12)**

Paul tells us that this is the first commandment with promise. (Eph. 6:2, 3.) It is, in fact, the only one of the ten commandments that has a promise attached. None of them has any penalty attached for its violation. The blessings for obedience, and the penalties for disobedience, are named in other parts of the law. By reason of age and experience parents should be wiser than children, and should know more how to conserve their health and strength; if children obey their parents, instead of indulging in hurtful practices, they prolong their lives. Besides, under the law, if children became unruly and dissipated, they did not live long, for they were stoned to death. (Deut. 21:18-21.) These relationships between husband and wife, and between parents and children, are fundamental, and inhere in the very nature of things; they existed before the ten commandments were announced, and they have continued to exist since the ten commandments were nailed to the cross. Unless they

are recognized and respected, no family can be what it should be. In the family therefore each member should make it as easy and as pleasant as possible for other members of the family to discharge their duties toward him. The wife can make it hard for her husband to love her, and the husband may make it hard for his wife to respect his authority as the head of the family. Children early feel their dependence on their parents; but their feeling of obligation toward their parents depends greatly on their teaching and training; and parents should make it easy for their children to honor them. It is hard for children to honor a fussy, selfish, and indolent mother, whose chief effort is to get what she can out of her children, or one who bestows her care and affections on a dog, and leaves the children to the care of a hired girl. And it is also hard for children to honor a father who is brutal to them, or who is a drunkard or an immoral wretch. And parents who rebel against the Father in heaven should not be surprised if their children rebel against them. However, children are required to honor their parents, and no conditions are named that would release them from that duty. But respect for parents depends greatly on the training parents give their children. Obedience is a characteristic that must be developed by the right sort of teaching and discipline. The child who is allowed to be rebellious and to have his own selfish way in the home is likely to be selfish and rebellious in all after relations of life. But to honor parents means more than to obey them; it means to care for them in their years of helpless dependence. Children who leave the care of their parents to the state or to some institution of charity do not honor them.

Jesus Obedient to His Parents (Luke 2:48-51)

At the age of twelve Jesus attended the Feast of the Passover in Jerusalem, with Joseph and Mary. At the end of the seven days of the feast Joseph and Mary started home. For company and protection crowds went and returned together. Having found at the end of the first day's travel that Jesus was not in the company as they had supposed, Joseph and Mary returned to Jerusalem seeking for him. "After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions." It is said that some of the greatest doctors of Jewish history lived about this period—Hillel, Simeon, and Gamaliel. His questions and answers to their questions astonished all who heard him. Of course Joseph and Mary were astonished to find him discussing questions with these great doctors of the law; and there seems to be a gentle rebuke in Mary's question: "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?" Naturally they had been extremely anxious about him, and to them it seems that he had been unmindful of them. "How is it that ye sought me?" This implies that they did not need to put in any time seeking him; they should have known where to find him. They should have known that he was not in places where he should not be. "Knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" Did ye not know that you would find me here? This seems to have been meant to call to their mind his deity. They knew his divine origin—his deity, but in their anxiety for him this truth likely had slipped their mind. However they did not fully understand the import of what he said, but "his mother kept all these sayings in her heart." Jesus returned to Nazareth with them; "and he was subject unto

them." We learn from Mark 6:1-3 that Jesus employed his time as a carpenter. No one could think of him as living in idleness while he was waiting for the time to enter upon his public ministry.

Vain Worship (Mark 7:6, 7)

The authorities in Jerusalem felt that they should look into all teachings that went on among the Jews. On the occasion of this lesson some Pharisees and scribes had come down from Jerusalem to look into matters and to antagonize Jesus. When they saw some of the disciples of Jesus eating without first washing their hands, they asked Jesus, "Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with defiled bands?" The words quoted from Isaiah were spoken to the Hebrews of his day, but they apply to all people who are like the people to whom Isaiah spoke and like the Pharisees to whom Jesus spoke. Jesus called the scribes and Pharisees hypocrites—told them plainly that they were hypocrites. The word translated "hypocrite" is the word the Greeks applied to an actor on a stage. He acted a part; he was not the person he assumed to be. It is easy to see how the word came to be applied to a person who pretended to be a godly man when he was not. Such a man wears a pious mask to hide his real character. And these "pious" hypocrites had almost the whole Jewish nation fooled into believing them to be what they pretended to be. These men and the people must have been greatly shocked when Jesus called them hypocrites. They flattered God, wore pious faces, and served the devil. They professed great loyalty to the law of God, but put the tradition of the elders above that law. "But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men." The heart, the spirit, must be in the worship, or it is not sincere, and that worship, or service, must be conducted according to God's truth, and not according to the doctrines of men. Insincere praise is flattery; and God does not accept flattery as a substitute for faithful obedience to his commands. All flatterers are liars. "But they flattered him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongue. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they faithful in his covenant." (Psalm 78:36, 37.) By mixing our doctrines with the commands of God, we do violence to God's law; we also profane God by so doing, for we thus profane God in making ourselves equal in authority with him. (Ezek. 22:26.)

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

When men begin to follow after the doctrines and traditions of men, the inevitable result is, they leave the commandments of God for their own ways. We cannot obey the commandments of God, and follow the doctrines and customs of men. The two cannot go together; we cannot serve two masters. And as respects custom and tradition, none of us are free from danger. Not so long ago many religionists held tenaciously to the man-invented mourners' bench system of conversion; they invariably spoke lightly, and even contemptuously, of God's command to be baptized. Some brethren became so wedded to the custom of putting their contributions in a hat on the table, that they quit attending worship when that custom was abandoned for a more orderly system. It happened to them according to the words of Jesus: "Full well do ye reject the

commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition." Jesus gives one illustration as to how these Pharisees had left the commandment of God to keep their tradition. Moses had commanded all children to honor their fathers and mothers; the penalty for failure to do so was death. (Ex. 20:12; 21:17; Lev. 20:9.) To honor father and mother is to obey them, to give them due respect, and to provide for them in their days of need. This is also commanded in the New Testament. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." (Eph. 6:1.) It is difficult these days to teach children these lessons, and it requires strength of character on the part of children to obey their parents; such obedience is not considered "the thing" these days. Hence, in a way entirely different from that of the Pharisees, we make void this command of God. At least we neglect this command. Jesus gives an example of their making void the command that children honor their parents. We are told that "Corban" originally meant a sacrifice or gift to God. The Pharisees taught that a son was no longer obligated to his parents, if he said to them, "Whatever profit I might have been to you is given to God," he was not then allowed to assist his parents in any way; in this way they made void the command that children should honor their parents.

Jesus Arranges for a Home for His Mother (John 19:25-27)

To satisfy the Jews Pilate had delivered Jesus up to be crucified. Luke tells us that as Jesus went to the place of crucifixion, "there followed him a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented him." (Luke 23:27.) John mentions four who stood by the cross. From Mark 15:40, 41 we learn the names of some of these women. These women drew near enough to the cross for Jesus to speak to his mother. They were all faithful followers of the Lord; we cannot imagine their anguish of heart, especially that of his mother. In the agonies of the cross Jesus did not forget his mother. Seeing her and John standing near, he said to her, "Woman, behold, thy son!" By a look or a nod he directed her attention to John. Then to John, "Behold, thy mother!" Mary's husband, Joseph, must have been dead, for it is written that John took her to his own home. And we can know that he became a devoted son to her.

SOME REFLECTIONS

A child is at first a bundle of appetites and passions. He soon develops a will, and will tends to assert itself. It would not be a will if it did not assert itself. That will needs guidance and restraint. The notion that children should be allowed self-expression means that the child should be allowed to do as he pleases; nothing could be more hurtful to the character of a child. Parents that fail to teach their children obedience fail to pay a debt that every parent owes to his children.

Parents who allow their children to "talk back" to them are training them in the fundamentals of disrespect for them and for all other authority. That sort of disrespect will grow on the child, till he becomes rebellious toward his parents; and then all hold on him for good is lost. Parents should have sense enough to know this, and energy enough to see that no such spirit develops in the child. If parents were better trained, they would be more successful

in training their children. If parents can teach their children the word of God, and train them up in obedience, industry, sobriety, truthfulness, and honesty, there is little grounds to fear as to their future behavior.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Duties and responsibilities of parents toward their children.
The duties of children to their parents.
How tradition and custom make void the word of God.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
Give the marriage law as first given.
Give God's order for family relationship.

Verse 12

Repeat this verse.
How would obedience to parents prolong life?
Discuss the fundamentals of family relationships.
How may parents gain the honor and respect of their children?

Luke 2:48-51

Discuss these verses.

Mark 7:6, 7

Name some of the traditions of the elders.

What complaint did they make about the disciples?

What did Jesus call them?

Give the origin of the word "hypocrite."

What is vain worship, and what makes it vain?

Discuss the difference between sincere praise and flattery.

Quote Psalm 78:36, 37.

Verses 8-13

Discuss the results of following traditions and customs of human origin.

Give some examples.

How did the Pharisees make void the command of Ex. 20:127

John 19:25-27

Discuss the incidents at the cross.

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson V—October 31, 1943

BIBLE TEACHINGS ON ABSTINENCE

Lev. 10:1, 2, 8-11; Prov. 31:4, 5; Luke 1:13-16

1 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took each of them his censer, and put fire therein, and laid incense thereon, and offered strange fire before Jehovah, which he had not commanded them.

2 And there came forth fire from before Jehovah, and devoured them, and they died before Jehovah

8 And Jehovah spake unto Aaron, saying,

9 Drink no wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tent of meeting, that ye die not: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations:

10 And that ye may make a distinction between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean;

11 And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which Jehovah hath spoken unto them by Moses.

4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine;
Nor for princes to say, Where is strong drink?

5 Lest they drink, and forget the law,
And pervert the justice due to any that is afflicted.

13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: because thy supplication is heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.

16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Beware, I pray thee, and drink no wine nor strong drink." (Judges 13:4.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 4.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

October 25.	M	Duties of Religious Leaders (Lev. 10:1, 2, 8-11)
October 26.	T	Duties of Rulers (Prov. 31:1-5)
October 27.	W	The Nazirite Vow (Luke 1:13-16)
October 28.	T	Parental Influences (Judges 13:8-14)
October 29.	F	Personal Efficiency (Dan. 1:8-20)
October 30.	S	Self-Control (Rom. 13:8-14)
October 31.	S	Christ's Example (1 Pet. 4:1-6)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For Leviticus, about 1490 B.C. It is not known when the thirty-first chapter of Proverbs was written. For Luke 1:13-16, probably 5 B.C.

Places.—Sinai and Jerusalem.

Persons.—Jehovah, the priests, the rulers, the angel Gabriel, and Zacharias.

Lesson Links.—The family of Aaron was selected to be the priestly family. (Ex. 28:1; Lev. 8.) Aaron was of the tribe of Levi, and the brother of Moses. Not all of the tribe of Levi were priests, but only the family of Aaron. Aaron had four sons—Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. Aaron was the first high priest; his sons were the priests. The eighth chapter of Leviticus tells of their induction into the office of priests. Their first official acts are recorded in the ninth chapter of Leviticus. After the priests had performed their required services, Moses and Aaron blessed the people, "and the glory of Jehovah appeared unto all the people. And there came forth fire from before Jehovah, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat: and when all the people saw it, they shouted, and fell on their faces." (Lev. 9:22-24.) But this rejoicing was soon overshadowed by a great sin, and another destructive fire from the presence of Jehovah.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Sin and Death of Nadab and Abihu (Verses 1, 2)

"And Nadab and Abihu . . . offered strange fire before Jehovah, which he had not commanded them." For their deed they were destroyed by fire. What prompted these young men to do this unauthorized act of worship has not been revealed; and there has been a lot of useless guessing about it. Some have contended that they should have used fire from the altar of burnt offerings; others have thought that they burnt incense at a time not authorized.

But what matters it to us? Whether their sin consisted in using fire other than that obtained from the altar of burnt offerings, or whether they offered their incense at a time not commanded, or whether they had performed all the required acts of worship and then added this for which they died, is of little importance. In doing either of these things they would have sinned. The thing

that we do know, and the thing that should impress us, is they performed an act of worship, or service, which Jehovah had not commanded them. These two priests presumed to perform an act of worship on their own responsibility, an act for which they had no authority. Jehovah had not said, "Ye shall not do this certain thing"; he had told them what to do, and they may have done all that he commanded for that day. Their trouble was they undertook to perform an act of worship which Jehovah had not commanded. They sought to improve on God's order—to add something of their own. A law includes what is required, and excludes all things else. "What thing soever I command you, that shall ye observe to do: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it." (Deut. 12:32.) Let every person who professes to be a worshiper of God examine himself—examine all his acts of worship and service, and see if everything he does is commanded of God. Let no one be deceived into thinking that one way is as good as another; the example of Nadab and Abihu shows how fatal is such a notion. God's way is the only way. "This then is the first lesson of this tragic occurrence. We have to do with a God who is very jealous; who will be worshiped as he wills, or not at all. Nor can we complain. If God be such a being as we are taught in the holy scriptures, it must be his inalienable right to determine and prescribe how he will be served. And a second lesson, scarcely less evident, that with God, intention of good, though it palliate, cannot excuse disobedience where he has once made known his will. No one can imagine that Nadab and Abihu meant wrong; but for that, for their sin they died."—An Exposition of the Bible. In verse 3, Moses said a significant thing: "Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that Jehovah spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified."

Priests on Duty Prohibited from Drinking Wine (Verses 8-11)

Nadab and Abihu were buried outside the camp. Aaron and his other two sons were required to remain wholly aloof from the matter. It seems that the demand of these verses grew out of the sin and death of Nadab and Abihu. If that be the correct conclusion, it indicates that these priests did their rash deed because they had been drinking wine or strong drink. The reason assigned for the prohibition stated also lends support to the conclusion that they had been drinking intoxicants. Jehovah said to Aaron, "Drink no wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tent of meeting, that ye die not." So far as this prohibition goes, it prohibits only their drinking intoxicants when on duty; that is, only when they officiated as priests. At such times they must not be under the influence of intoxicants. This was a perpetual requirement for the priests. But the reason assigned for the abstinence required of the priests will apply, so it seems, to all Christians—"that ye may make a distinction between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean; and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which Jehovah hath spoken unto them by Moses." The holy things were the things which God had ordained; the common were all the other things which man might do, things that God had not commanded. Nadab and Abihu had made

no distinction between the holy and the common; they had mixed their own plans with Jehovah's commands, and for that they died a horrible death. Intoxication blunts the judgment, and sometimes fires the imagination with fantastic notions, so that the priests would be likely to do almost any unauthorized thing. Later Jehovah said of the priests in Jerusalem, "Her priests have done violence to my law, and have profaned my holy things." The explanation was immediately given as to how they had done so: "They have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they caused men to discern between the unclean and the clean." (Ezek. 22:26.)

Strong Drink Not for Rulers (Prov. 31:4, 5)

Verse 1: "The words of king Lemuel; the oracle which his mother taught him." Some commentators have tried to figure out that in some way the name Lemuel refers to Solomon; but there seems to be no grounds for such a supposition. A man who is intoxicated makes a poor showing at governing himself. Certainly a man cannot govern others if he has no control over himself. People are in a deplorable condition when they depend on drunkards to make and enforce the laws. A drunkard cannot think accurately nor judge righteously. Men who are in positions of trust, where the lives and property of others are at stake, should be sober men. Parents are supposed to be governors in their own homes, and children who have drunken parents are to be pitied. Certainly those who have in their hands the welfare—even the destiny—of a nation should be sober men. A drunkard is unfit to rule anything, not even an automobile on the highway.

A Son Promised to Zacharias and Elisabeth (Luke 1:13, 14)

Zacharias was a priest; his wife Elisabeth was also of the family of Aaron, the priestly family. "They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years." (Verses 6, 7.) While Zacharias was burning incense in the temple, "there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and a great fear fell upon him." (Verses 11, 12.) Men have always feared when they found themselves in the presence of a heavenly visitor. From verse 19 we learn this angel was Gabriel: "And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak unto thee, and to bring thee these good tidings." Zacharias, being old at this time, and childless, had, of course, prayed many years for a son. As both he and Elisabeth were now old—"well stricken in years," he had doubtless given up all hope of a child being born to him. "But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: because thy supplication is heard, and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son." That a son should be born to them in their advanced age would convince these good people that the hand of God was in the matter, and therefore a great purpose was to be served by this son. Even his name was divinely selected: "and thou shalt call his name John." It seems to have been the custom to give a son a name when he was circumcised (Luke 1:59-63), but

this son-to-be was named by divine authority before he was conceived in his mother's womb. It seems that nothing was more disappointing to a Hebrew wife than to be childless; the husband was equally disappointed at not having a son to perpetuate his family. We can but faintly imagine how much the angel's announcement warmed Zacharias' heart, and especially to know that this promised son was to have a great part in carrying out the plans of God. Zacharias would therefore have joy and gladness; and not only he, but many would rejoice at his birth. And in later years, when people saw and heard what great things John did, they would rejoice that such a man had been born into the world.

John's Character and Mission (Verses 15, 16)

It takes more than ordinary qualities in a man for him to be called great in the sight of the Lord. "And he shall drink no wine nor strong drink." It is taken as a matter settled by some authorities that John was therefore a Nazirite from childhood, but the mere fact that he refrained from drinking intoxicating liquors did not make of him a Nazirite. Read Num. 6:1-21 for the requirements of a Nazirite vow. It was a vow of entire separation to the Lord, and entered into voluntarily for a specified length of time. Earlier translators and authorities spelled the word Nazirite, and some thought it had some connection with Nazareth. The origin of that peculiar vow is not given; the law of Moses did not require anyone to make the vow, but it did outline the requirements of the vow. It may be true that John did all the things required of one who made the Nazirite vow, but the record does not say so. "And he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit." He was therefore to be a prophet of God. Jesus informs us that John was a prophet, "and much more than a prophet." (Matt. 11:9.) From the Savior's speech about John, we learn that he was not bent about by the shifts in public opinions; he was a sturdy character. He was not soft and effeminate. He had the courage to rebuke King Herod for his unlawful marriage with his brother's wife. (Matt. 11:2-19; 14:1-12.) He was God's prophet, God's spokesman; and he spoke God's word without hesitation or wavering. He did not seek to appease, but to convict. He was not too polished or polite to tell men what they were, and what they needed to do. If he had not been bold and fearless in proclaiming the message God gave him, the words of the angel Gabriel would not have come to pass: "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God." The substance of his preaching is summed up in this brief statement: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." But people will not repent unless they are made to see the need of repentance. So long as the Jew felt that to be a son of Abraham gave him full favor with God, he would not see the need of repentance. "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. And even now the axe also lieth at the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." (Luke 3:7-9.) With such preaching the nation was stirred as it had not been in a long time.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Men are not very cautious when they are under the influence of intoxicating liquors.

Nadab and Abihu added to the worship God had appointed for the day. To the average person the burning of incense when God had not commanded them to do so would seem to be a small matter. They may say, "God had not said, Ye shall not burn incense in such a manner." Certainly not; but he had given a daily program for the tabernacle service. Nadab and Abihu went beyond that—made an addition of their own. That was not a small matter. A nickel is a small thing, but stealing a nickel is not a small thing. The mother says to the child, "Hand me that spool of thread." The child replies, "I'll not do it." A spool of thread is a small thing, but the rebellion and impudence in the child's heart was not a small thing. Let us not therefore deceive ourselves into rebellion by saying, "It is such a small matter; what difference can it make?" Disobedience is never a small matter, and people can disobey in small matters as well as in great matters.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The evils that may result from drinking intoxicants.
The sin of changing God's order.
The character of John the Baptist.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Prov. 31:4, 5

Discuss the scope and application of these verses.

Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
Who were the priests under the law?

Luke 1:13, 14

Give facts about Zacharias and Elisabeth.
Who appeared to Zacharias, and where?
What did the angel say to Zacharias?
Who was this angel?

Verses 1, 2

In what way did Nadab and Abihu sin?
How may we commit similar sins?

Verses 15, 16

Do the facts revealed warrant us in saying that John was a Nazirite?
Discuss the Nazirite vow.
Discuss the character of John.
What was his mission?
What did John preach?
What strikes you as the most outstanding thing about John and his preaching?
Discuss the reflections.

Verses 8-11

What does the prohibition of these verses indicate as to Nadab and Abihu?
Repeat and discuss the prohibition of these verses.
What special reason was assigned for this prohibition?
Discuss Ezek. 22:26.

Lesson VI—November 7, 1943

THE SACREDNESS OF HUMAN LIFE

Ex. 20:13; Matt. 5:21-26, 38-45

13 Thou shalt not kill.

21 Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

22 But I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca,

shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire.

23 If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee,

24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art with him in the way; lest haply the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

26 Verily I say unto thee: Thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou have paid the last farthing.

38 Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

39 But I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 And if any man would go to law with thee and take away thy coat let him have thy cloak also.

41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two.

42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

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

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

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

GOLDEN TEXT—"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." (1 John 3:15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—James 4:1-10.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

November 1.	M	The Sacredness of Human Life (Matt. 5:21-26)
November 2.	T	The Law of Love (Matt. 5:38-48)
November 3.	W	The Worth of Man (Matt. 18:10-14)
November 4.	T	Divine Ownership of Man (Psalm 24:1-10)
November 5.	F	Christ's Peaceable Kingdom (Isa. 11:1-10)
November 6.	S	Evil Desire the Source of Strife (James 4:1-10)
November 7.	S	Love the Test of Sonship (1 John 3:7-15)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For Exodus 20:13, about 1491 B.C.; for Matthew 5, probably A.D. 28.

Places.—Mount Sinai, and a mountain in Galilee.

Persons.—Jehovah, the children of Israel, Jesus, his disciples, and the multitudes. From Matt. 7:28, 29 we learn that the multitudes were present when Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount.

Lesson Links.—This is really a lesson against murder and the condition of heart that leads to murder. It is hard to get a lesson heading that exactly fits the lesson. There does not seem to be anything sacred about a man who is wholly given over to the service of the devil; but even so, we are not to murder him. In the first recorded law against murder, God tells why it is wrong to murder: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." (Gen. 9:6.) This fundamental law was announced just after the flood, hundreds of years before the law of Moses was given; and this law against murder was based on the fact that man was made in the image of God. But, if, as some claim, that image in man was destroyed when Adam sinned, then there would be no such basis as God assigns for the law against murder. But the theory is wrong. Man is made in the image of

God, and therefore murder is wrong. And in this first recorded law against murder there is the divine decree that the murderer must himself atone for his murder with his own life. A man's life is his own, and no one has a right to take it from him, unless by crime he forfeits his right to live; then he must be dealt with according to law. Individual malice must not take into its own hands the business of executing a criminal. To do so is murder. It is because man bears the image of God that it is wrong to murder. Life is cheap to a person who does not recognize the image of God in man. Many think no more of taking a human life than of killing an animal. Many think of man as only of a little higher grade animal than the beasts, or birds, or fishes, having arrived at this superior stage by a long process of evolution. If that principle becomes a man's controlling philosophy of life, he will take human life with as little compunction of conscience as he would kill any animal that had not advanced quite so far. And why not? His theory makes a man's life no more to be regarded than the life of a fish. Any theory that cheapens human life encourages murder. That should be self-evident to any thoughtful person.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

"Thou Shalt Not Kill" (Verse 13)

The extent and limitations of this sixth commandment must be understood in the light of the whole law of which it is a part. It must be understood in the light in which Jehovah intended the children of Israel to understand it. To try to modify its meaning to make it fit into New Testament teaching is to do violence to it, for they did not then have the New Testament. It may be said that we are not now under the Old Testament, and that is true; but we are seeking to understand this passage as it was applied to the Hebrews. We can be sure that God did not give them a command, and then require them to violate it on many occasions. The older law (Gen. 9:6) was not limited to any race or nation, and that law required the execution of the murderer. This sixth command did not contravene the older and universal law. The law of Moses, of which the sixth commandment was a part, required various criminals to be put to death. Of course guilt had to be established in a fair trial. Here are a few of the crimes punished by death under the law of Moses: murder (Ex. 21:12, 14), sorcery (Ex. 22:18), idolatry (Ex. 22:20; Deut. 17:2-7), profaning the Sabbath (Ex. 31:14, 15), and many others. It is evident that the command, "Thou shalt not kill," had sole reference to murder, and not to legal executions. And yet the law had this provision for man's protection: "If the thief be found breaking in, and be smitten so that he dieth, there shall be no bloodguiltiness for him." (Ex. 22:2-4.) A man was therefore allowed to kill another in self-defense, but was not allowed to follow up the criminal and kill him. That had to be done by the proper authorities. These points are not presented to show what Christians should do, but to give some idea as to the scope and limitations of the sixth commandment. And yet there is a degree of similarity between these provisions of the law and what Paul says in Rom. 12:19; 13:1-4. The government is the proper authority to deal with such matters; and yet the govern-

ment is not likely to make any move unless the injured person makes complaint.

Against Anger and Ugly Names (Matt. 5:21, 22)

Jesus lived under the law of Moses, and kept it so perfectly that no one could convict him of sin; and he taught his disciples to obey the law. Jesus was not therefore in this sermon setting aside the law, nor contradicting it; he was going back of the deeds to the thoughts that give rise to violations of the law. Jesus condemned the anger that might lead to murder. Hot anger is a dangerous emotion, and should be as carefully guarded against as a dangerous contagion. Never try to justify fits of anger on the grounds of temper; that is really a confession of weakness, for the will should be stronger than your feelings of resentment and anger. Many hotheads have worked on themselves till they became gentle and free of fits of anger. You cannot excuse yourself for violating God's word. It is generally understood that judgment here refers to the sentence passed by the Jewish court. Raca was an expression of contempt, as brainless, or worthless. To call a brother such names was to be in danger of the council, the Jewish high court. Neither should he say, "Thou fool." Jesus was warning them against using rough and harsh expression about a fellow Jew. But such habits are too common amongst Christians; it shows a lack of regard for others and for the truth. The habit of using such expressions grows on people, if they make no effort to hold themselves in check. Respect for the Golden Rule will prevent all such speech.

"Agree with Thine Adversary Quickly" (Verses 23-26)

Some of the things Jesus taught his disciples were designed to regulate their conduct under the law of Moses. An example: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat: all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe: but do not ye after theft works; for they say, and do not." (Matt. 23:2, 3.) We cannot follow literally the things said in this section of the lesson. We do not, and cannot, bring gifts to the altar, as did the Jews. But even so, the lesson to us is plain. If the Jew, as he was about to make his offering, remembered that his brother had aught against him, could not worship God acceptably till he first made things right with the brother he had wronged, it is certainly binding on us to undo any wrong to a brother. If your heart is not right toward a brother, it cannot be right toward God. Verse 25 shows that the offended brother was bringing suit, or about to bring suit, against the offending brother, and that he had grounds for the suit. The offender should hasten to make things right with the offended brother, "lest haply the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison." If he was cast into prison for a debt, and was not able to pay himself out, and no friend would do so, he remained there till he died. If that is a type of what is to be the final doom of the disciple of Christ who refuses to make right any wrong he has done a brother, the final doom of such is sealed, for in the Lord's prison for offenders none will ever have anything with which to pay. It is hard for the average person to realize that it is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong. You want to contend for your rights? But know this, your fancied

rights often may trespass on the actual rights of others. "Why not rather take wrong? why not rather be defrauded? Nay, but ye yourselves do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren." (1 Cor. 6:7, 8.) Several evils come from contending for fancied or real rights. Generally the one who wins loses; he certainly loses influence and friends, and sometimes stirs up trouble in a community. A lawsuit, or a squabble, between two members of the church is certain to do great injury to the church. The plea that one is contending for his rights is a poor excuse for working injury to the body of Christ.

Against Returning Evil for Evil (Verses 38, 39)

The law said, "And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbor; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him: breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be rendered unto him." (Lev. 24:19, 20.) It is said that the Jews had so perverted this law as to justify private, or personal, retaliation; but all such complaints were to be established before proper authorities, and they were to assess the penalties. A charge could not be established on the testimony of one witness. If a man could not establish by competent witnesses the charge he brought against a man, "then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to do unto his brother." This would tend to prevent the bringing of suits through spite. Jesus was not countermanding these demands of the law so long as the law was in force, but was condemning their so perverting the law as to justify personal retaliation. He would prevent personal brawls. He would not have a man to take matters in his own hands, and seek in a personal way to inflict the required penalty; that was to be done by the proper authorities.

Be More Generous Than Justice Demands (Verses 40-42)

If a man is about to bring suit against another, the presumption is that he thinks he has just grounds for his suit, though that is not always the case. No matter what are his grounds for the suit, if he is about to bring suit against a man for his coat, it is better to settle the matter out of court, even if the party about to be sued has to give both his coat and his cloak to effect a settlement. Usually the one who gains a suit loses more than he gains. This is viewing the matter from purely economic grounds, and there are other considerations. For his own personal good—for his contentment and peace of mind, it is better to make a sacrifice to effect a settlement than to go through the worry of a suit. To seek to settle a grudge bringing suit, or to fight a suit because of pride or stubbornness, of poor business; and such actions do not make for good citizenship. Certainly no Christian should be moved by such motives. And as to traveling then, conditions were quite different from what they are now. When the government sent a man on a mission, he might need assistance along the way. He had authority to require men to assist him. When such was necessary, it was likely to be very inconvenient, and even oppressive. Even so, it was better to double the required service than to refuse. If he did more than was required, no one could object; if he refused the assistance, he would likely get into trouble with the government. Neither should we fail to give to helpless people, but our aid to people should be given in such way as not to encourage idleness.

"Love Your Enemies" (Verses 43-45)

The law nowhere commanded the Hebrew to hate his enemy, but the Pharisees, or earlier exegetes, had somehow come to that conclusion. Perhaps they thought, since they were to love their neighbor, they were to pursue the opposite course toward their enemy. But more likely they miserably perverted Deut. 23:3-6, where the Lord commanded them not to seek the peace or prosperity of the Ammonites and Moabites. The Greeks had two words for love; the word here used is not the one that expresses warm affection growing out of association; it is the word that expresses moral obligation. It requires that we do good to our enemies when we can. Our Father gives sunshine and rain to the good and the evil; his children must do good as they find opportunity.

SOME REFLECTIONS

It is our duty to have a care for the welfare and comfort of others, as well as for their lives. No man has a right to have his own way regardless of the trouble he may cause others. There are a lot of thoughtless people in the world, and also too many selfish people. People can disturb others in ways too numerous to mention.

Even if we are able to give but little, that little should be given wisely. The man who asks for money to buy something to eat may want it to buy liquor. Or he may be honest and hungry. Take him to a restaurant, and see that he is fed. Also men have been made beggars by finding that begging is an easy way to obtain money.

Under the law of Moses the testimony of two or three witnesses was required to prove a case. (Deut. 17:6.) The same principle holds good under the gospel. But the requirement to have two or three witnesses applies only to human testimony. It is a shame that preachers will sometimes quote two or three passages as proof, and then add, "At the mouth of two witnesses or three shall every word be established," thereby implying that if God said a thing only once, we should not believe him!

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Capital punishment.

The sin of slander.

The Christian's obligation to the needy.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.

Repeat the first recorded law against murder.

To whom does that law apply?

What reason did God assign for this law against murder?

What theory destroys that reason?

Verse 13

How are we to understand the extent and limitations of the sixth commandment?

Name some crimes punishable by death under the law of Moses.

Under what circumstances was one man allowed to kill another?

What then did the sixth commandment prohibit?

Matt. 5:21, 22

What was the attitude of Jesus toward the law of Moses?
 What contrast did he make concerning the command, "Thou shalt not kill"?
 Why should people overcome fits of anger?
 Discuss calling people ugly names.

Verses 23-26

Discuss verses 23 and 24, showing how the principle applies to us.
 Discuss verses 25 and 26.

Verses 38, 39

What did the law say regarding personal injuries?
 What about the man who brought false charges against another?
 What did Jesus teach by way of contrast?

Verses 40-42

Discuss verses 40-42.

Verses 43-45

Discuss these verses.
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VII—November 14, 1943

THE SANCTITY OF THE HOME

Ex. 20:14; Matt. 5:27-30; Mark 10:2-12

14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

27 Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28 But I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29 And if thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell.

30 And if thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body go into hell.

2 And there came unto him Pharisees, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? trying him.

3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?

4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.

5 But Jesus said unto them, For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment.

6 But from the beginning of the creation, Male and female made he them.

7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife;

8 And the two shall become one flesh: so that they are no more two, but one flesh.

9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

10 And in the house the disciples asked him again of this matter.

11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her:

12 And if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery.

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

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Prov. 2:11-22.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

November 8. M
 November 9. T
 November 10. W
 November 11. T
 November 12. F
 November 13. S
 November 14. S

The Sanctity of the Home (Matt. 5:27-32)
 The Sacredness of Marriage (Mark 10:2-12)
 The Value of Discretion (Prov. 2:10-22)
 The Husband's Duty (Eph. 5:25-33)
 Harmonious Living (1 Cor. 13:1-8)
 Safeguarding Future Generations (Psalm 78:1-8)
 Spiritual Fruitage (Psalm 92:8-15)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For Ex. 20:14, probably 1491 B.C.; for Matt. 5, probably A.D. 28; for Mark 10:2-12, probably A.D. 30.

Places.—Sinai, a mountain in Galilee, and some point in Perea.

Persons.—Jehovah, the children of Israel, Jesus, his disciples, the multitudes, and the Pharisees.

Lesson Links.—Men have sought out many inventions in material, social, and religious affairs; but the fundamental nature of human beings remains the same—men are still men, and women are still women, and all have their likes and dislikes, their appetites and passions. When God created man, he said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him—not a helpmeet, as some spell it, but a help meet for him, a help suitable for him. The woman is therefore not only a help, but a help exactly suited to man's needs. Apparently it is no better for a woman to be alone than it is for a man to be alone. People cannot reach the fullest development, cannot live the richest life, excepting along the lines God has marked out for them. He made them, and knows wherein lies their greatest good for both this life and the next. To promote man's happiness and well-being, God himself instituted the marriage relation, and therefore the family and the home. Nature therefore demands such a relationship; we cannot get away from nature. But neither husband nor wife is happy unless the sacredness of their union is respected and kept inviolate. The we/I-being of the family, the community, and the nation depends on the purity of the people. A nation cannot long endure when no regard is had for the duties and obligations of the marriage vows. A nation cannot be better than its citizens. If the principles taught in the Bible are the guiding philosophy of a nation, it is bound to be peaceful and contented. A civil contract may be entered into by the husband and wife, but marriage is more than a civil contract. It is the union in marriage of a man and a woman under the solemn laws of God, as well as of man. The divorce evil is now at an alarming height, and shows how lightly the marriage vows are held. Such evils would not go on increasing if God were not left out of consideration. Another evil, so many people, even married people, are loose in their morals. Because of these evils both the nation and the church are suffering; and real home life is fast disappearing.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON**The Seventh Commandment (Verse 14)**

"Thou shalt not commit adultery." Adultery is defined as "voluntary sexual intercourse by a married man with another than his wife or by a married woman with another than her husband." The Bible does not always make a distinction between adultery and fornication. If we do not allow that the word adultery here includes also fornication, then there is no prohibition in the ten commandments against unchastity in unmarried people. There are no provisions in the ten commandments for the enforcement of any of its demands. The penalties for any violations of these commandments are found in what some people choose to call the ceremonial law. "And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor's wife,

the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death." (Lev. 20:10.) Of course, when the penalty for the violation of that commandment was abolished, the commandment itself ceased to be operative.

Adultery in the Heart (Matt. 5:27, 28)

Jesus extended the commandment against adultery so as to include the thoughts and desires of the heart. The law of Moses did not make the commandment against adultery include the desires of the heart; for the judges, whose duty it was to enforce the law, could not know the condition of the heart, save as it expressed itself in action. But God, who knows the secrets of the heart, judges the thoughts and desires of the heart as well as the deeds of the body. The thoughts, desires, and motives of the heart determine character. Hence, if a man lusts after a woman, though he lacks opportunity to carry out his lustful desires, he is an adulterer. Adultery here includes all lewdness, whether the person be married or unmarried. Notice that Jesus includes all—"every one." This "every one" includes the married and the unmarried. "A woman" is any woman, whether married or unmarried.

Extreme Sacrifices May Be Necessary (Verses 29, 30)

It is thought by some that Jesus meant for us to sever ourselves from anything, no matter how dear it is to us, if it is going to cause us to be lost. It is certainly true we should be willing to give up anything that stands in our way of being saved. It is difficult for us to see how our real right eye or right hand might be the occasion of our being cast into hell; but if this was about to be the case, why think the language so strange and harsh? Many have given up their lives rather than to do something for which to be cast into hell. Giving up an eye or a hand is much less than giving up the life of the body.

The Pharisees Question Jesus About Divorce (Mark 10:2-5)

"And there came unto him Pharisees." These Pharisees constantly hounded Jesus; they would not, or could not, leave him alone. Even now thoughtful, wide-awake people cannot be indifferent toward him; they cannot ignore him, as they can ignore other historic characters. They will be for him or against him. Jesus himself said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth." (Matt. 12:30.) We may wonder at men's unbelief, but not at the hostility of the unbeliever. The Pharisees tried various schemes to trap Jesus; now they put this question: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? trying him." Matthew's report has, "for every cause." On this point the two great schools of thought among the Jews at that time differed widely. The controversy raged over what Moses meant by "unseemly thing" in Deut. 24:1: "When a man taketh a wife, and marrieth her, then it shall be, if she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her, that he shall write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house." Shammai held that the "unseemly thing" referred to adultery; Hillel held that it meant anything with which a husband might be displeased, even the overcooking or oversalting of his food. These Pharisees

felt sure Jesus would have to answer their question in such way as to turn one of these schools against him; it therefore made no difference to them which school he might offend. They were not seeking information, but trying to have Jesus say something that would turn some people against him, and they did not see how their ruse could fail. Jesus was not interested in what Shammai and Hillel, or any other man, taught; but he sought an expression from his questioners. "What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away." They did not directly answer his question; notice they said, "Moses suffered," instead of saying, "Moses commanded." They evaded the point as to the grounds of divorcement; but the answer Jesus gave shows that Moses allowed divorce on more grounds than one: "for your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment." The liberal divorce law should not have filled the Jews with pride; it was really a fearful indictment of them—liberal because of the hardness of their heart. Because of their brutality Moses had allowed them to divorce a helpless woman to keep them from continually abusing a wife who had lost their favor, and perhaps to keep them from secretly putting her to death to get rid of her. It seems to have been given in mercy for the woman. That law was as high a standard as they would live up to. To be enforceable, a law must be in the moral reach of those for whom it is made. Disregarding this essential principle of legislation, infidels have sought to discredit the morals of the law of Moses.

The Original Marriage Law (Verses 8-9)

"But from the beginning of the creation, Male and female made he them." It has been pointed out that the sense here would have been plainer and more accurately expressed, had the translators given it as follows: "A male and a female made he them." It is a fact that he did make a male and a female, one man and one woman. God had a great purpose in so doing; and when a man and a woman cooperate with God in carrying out his plans for them, they are engaged in a high and holy mission. No married couple should evade the natural results of the married relation. Verse 7 does not mean that a man should turn from his parents and give them no further attention when he marries, but that he is entering upon the discharge of obligations that must claim his chief attention. His obligations to his wife now take precedence; "And shall cleave to his wife"—glue himself to her, for so is the force of the Greek. He is not merely to enter into some sort of contract with a woman to live together so long as the arrangement may be convenient and satisfactory, but the union is meant to be broken only by death. It enjoins on both husband and wife to make an earnest effort to live together in peace. Too many shut their eyes to the faults of the other before marriage, and then hunt for faults after marriage. They marry an angel, and then find themselves wedded to a common human being; and too often they do not try to adjust themselves to the new discovery, and trouble comes. If each one would try to make the married life of the other happy, there would be few divorces. Husband and wife become one flesh; their two natures are blended in one in their child. Children are born into this world with very definite claims on their parents; one is that they are

entitled to real parents, parents who will love them, care for them, train them to be honest and useful. Children should be an additional tie between husband and wife. The instinctive desire of every man, woman, and child is to have a home, a real home, where they can shut themselves out from the world, from undesirable associates, and where they can rest in quiet and contentment. Divorce is a crime against the innocent companion, and especially against the children.

The Disciples Ask for More Light (Verses 10-12)

The original marriage law made no provision for divorce on any grounds, for the union of husband and wife was intended to be unbroken; this is the law to which the Savior appealed in replying to the Pharisees. But it sometimes happens that one of the contracting parties is not true to the marriage vows, but takes up with someone else. When that is the case, the marriage oneness is broken; what then shall the innocent party do? This seems to have been the point about which the disciples inquired when they had gone into the house away from the Pharisees. Matthew gives this reply Jesus made to the inquiring disciples: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery." The marriage law was stated, and then an exception was given. A general law is made or announced; then, if there are any exceptions, they are stated; that is true in all systems of law. Paul states another exception: "Yet if the unbelieving departeth, let him depart: the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases." (1 Cor. 7:15.) If the believer is not, in such cases, entirely released from the marriage bond, he is still under bondage. It seems that the language can mean nothing else; and why should we not so understand it? No language could be plainer. After marriage one party became a Christian; the other became so incensed as to leave the believer. The believer was not under bondage in such cases. If the believer was not completely released, then he was still under bondage.

SOME REFLECTIONS

When two people marry, their future happiness depends greatly on the regard each one has for the feelings, desires, and needs of the other. To a young couple marriage is an entirely new experience, and each must learn the art of adjustment and sacrifice. Neither has the right to make the other miserable. Unselfishness will pay great dividends in pleasure and contentment. Selfishness is at the bottom of most of the trouble between married people.

Too many people try to evade the natural results and responsibilities of the married relation. In seeking to evade the responsibilities of parenthood, they cheat themselves out of much of the joys of life. God's plan cannot be avoided without sin and trouble.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The need of morality.

The divorce evil—its cause and the remedy.

What is a Christian home?

The duty of parents to children, and of children to parents.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
Give the original marriage law.
Show that marriage is a divine institution.

Verse 14

Repeat the seventh of the ten commandments.
What provisions were made for the enforcement of the ten commandments?

Matt. 5:27, 28

What addition did Jesus make to the seventh commandment?

Verses 29, 30

Discuss these verses.

Mark 10:2-5

Why does Jesus challenge the attention of thoughtful people?

Why cannot people be neutral?
What question did the Pharisees ask Jesus?
Why did they think that question would make trouble for Jesus?
What did Jesus ask them, and what was their reply?
Why was that provision of the law made?

Verses 6-9

What was the marriage law in the beginning?
What obligations and duties does marriage impose?
What causes trouble between husband and wife?
What rights have children in respect to their parents?

Verses 10-12

What provisions did Jesus make for divorce and remarriage?
What about a law and the exceptions to it?
Discuss 1 Cor. 7:15.
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VIII—November 21, 1943

HONESTY IN ALL THINGS

Ex. 20:15; Lev. 19:11, 13; Luke 19:1-10, 45, 46

15 Thou shalt not steal.
11 Ye shall not steal; neither shall ye deal falsely, nor lie one to another.
13 Thou shalt not oppress thy neighbor, nor rob him: the wages of a hired servant shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.
1 And he entered and was passing through Jericho.
2 And behold, a man called by name Zacchaeus; and he was a chief publican, and he was rich.
3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the crowd, because he was little of stature.
4 And he ran on before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.
5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house.
6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.
7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner.
8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said Unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold.
9 And Jesus said unto him, Today is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.
10 For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.
45 And he entered into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold,
46 Saying unto them, It is written, And my house shall be a house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of robbers.
GOLDEN TEXT—"Thou shalt not steal." (Ex. 20:15.)
DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 6:24-33.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

November 15. M	Honesty in All Things (Lev. 19:11, 13)
November 16. T	An Honest Man (Luke 19:1-10)
November 17. W	Integrity Rewarded (Prov. 2:6-9)
November 18. T	Samuel's Integrity (1 Sam. 12:1-5)
November 19. F	Just Dealings (Lev. 19:33-37)
November 20. S	Godliness Is Profitable (Prov. 11:1-8)
November 21. S	Being Honest with God (Mal. 3:7-12)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For Exodus 20:15, according to Hales, 1647 B.C.; according to Usher, 1491 B.C. For Luke 19:1-10, 45, 46, probably A.D. 30.

Places.—Sinai, Jericho, and the temple in Jerusalem.

Persons.—Jehovah, the children of Israel, Jesus, Zacchaeus, and the traders in the temple.

Lesson Links.—It has been pointed out that a law with no penalty attached for its violation is not enforceable; it is practically null and void. In the list of the ten commandments no penalties are named for the violation of any of them. The penalties are named in what some people call the ceremonial law. There are no scriptural grounds for making this distinction, nor for calling the ten commandments the law of God, and the rest of the law the law of Moses. It is then assumed that the ten commandments are greater and of more importance than the rest of the law. If these distinctions are correct, they presented a peculiar situation. Such reasoning as this makes the ten commandments, what some call God's law, the moral law, depend on the lesser law, the ceremonial law, for the provisions to enforce the greater law. Also, the two greatest commandments of the law are found in what some call the ceremonial law, the two commandments on which the ten commandments and all the rest of the law hung. (Mark 12:28-34.) This imagery is drawn from the practice of hanging the scroll of the scriptures on a peg or hook on the wall of the synagogue. If the hook or peg failed, the scroll fell with it. It seems that any reader can see what happened to all the rest of the law, and also the prophets, if and when the "ceremonial law" failed. Some things are wrong in the very nature of things. It has always been wrong for one person to invade the rights of others. Every person has a right to life and the property he honestly acquires, until he by criminal conduct forfeits his rights; these rights can be taken from him only by due process of law; it has always been wrong for any individual, on his own initiative, to do what should be done by the constituted authorities. Since God has spoken, it is a crime against both the laws of nature and the laws of revelation for an individual to take the life or property of another. Most people know what honesty is, but many seem not to know the evil results of dishonesty.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Eighth Commandment (Verse 15)

"Thou shalt not steal." Technically there is a difference between stealing, robbing, defrauding, and cheating; but there is little, if any, difference in the conditions of heart that prompts these different forms of dishonesty. In either case the innocent party is being deprived of property that rightfully belongs to him. There

are many ways in which a person can be dishonest without violating any human law; but there is no way in which a person can be dishonest without violating God's law, for it deals with the heart, the motives, as well as with the deed. The law of Moses did not deal so much with the condition of the heart as with the deed. The law of Moses was an improvement over some of the civil laws of today; it was to be enforced in such way that the innocent party in a theft did not suffer the loss. "If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall pay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep." The thief was not punished so severely, if the stolen animal was still in his possession. "If the theft be found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall pay double." (Ex. 22:1, 4.) Other property which a man had appropriated to his own use had to be restored to its rightful owner with a fifth of its value added. (Lev. 6:1-7.) He also had to make a trespass offering to Jehovah. To make a thief pay a fine to the state, or to serve a prison sentence, is not as fair and just to the person who has been robbed of his property as was this provision of the law of Moses. But every student of the Bible knows that all these provisions of the law of Moses ended at the cross.

Deal Honestly (Lev. 19:11, 13)

The Hebrew was commanded to deal fairly—he was commanded not to steal, nor deal falsely, nor to lie to his neighbor. It has never been right to lie; why should anyone think it is right to lie to another's hurt and for his own gain? And yet it is a common evil. It is severely condemned in the New Testament. "Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor: for we are members one of another." (Eph. 4:25.) "Lie not one to another." (Col. 3:9.) "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. 21:8.) No sort of oppression was allowed under the law. The hired servant was to be paid at the end of the day's work—no deferment of paying the laborer was allowed.

Zacchaeus, a Chief Publican (Luke 19:1, 2)

Jesus was on his last journey to Jerusalem to attend his last Passover, the last Passover that God required anyone to attend. He had traveled down on the east side of the Jordan, through Perea, the usual route traveled between Galilee and Jerusalem. Great crowds would be traveling this road as the time for the Passover drew nigh; they would pass through Jericho. Great crowds gathered about Jesus as he was passing through Jericho, so much so that it must have been difficult to move along. In that throng was a man named Zacchaeus, a citizen of Jericho. "He was a chief publican, and he was rich." The Roman method of collecting taxes was to farm out the taxes, that is, they sold the right to collect taxes in various districts. The man who bought the right to collect taxes in a given district would have men under him. This gives us an idea as to why Zacchaeus was called a chief publican; the taxgatherers were called publicans. It would be unpleasant to pay taxes to any foreign oppressor; it was especially distasteful to a Jew, for most of

the Jews did not think it was right to do so. Hence, if a fellow Jew became a collector for the Roman government, they would immediately count him an outcast, both a social and a religious outcast. To them he was unclean. Even though Zacchaeus was a rich man, he was an unclean outcast. Of course Zacchaeus knew all this before he became a publican; he therefore could not complain at his lot. But he must have often longed for the society of his fellow Jews, and to enjoy again full religious privileges with them.

Zacchaeus Seeks to See Jesus (Verses 3, 4)

Jesus had just given sight to a blind man, and this intensified the interest of the crowds. Zacchaeus desired to see the man who was creating so much excitement; "and could not for the crowd." The teaching and miracles of Jesus had created great excitement. So dense was the crowd surrounding Jesus that Zacchaeus could not press his way through it to a point where he could see Jesus; and he was little of stature, and could not see over the heads of the people. But he was determined and resourceful. He knew of a sycamore tree up the way where Jesus would pass, and knew he could reach that tree before Jesus would; so he ran ahead of the crowd, and climbed the tree. When there is excitement, people like to see the cause of it; it is therefore likely that Zacchaeus had no higher motive than natural curiosity. As he ran and climbed that tree, he had no idea of the excitement and good fortune that was just ahead of him.

Jesus Lodges with Zacchaeus (Verses 5-7)

"And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up." Zacchaeus had not expected that. He must have been doubly surprised when Jesus addressed him by name, and even more astonished at what Jesus said to him. He expected no Jew to speak to him in a friendly way, and certainly not to say to him, "To-day I must abide at thy house." It is not likely that any of the strict Jews had spoken to him except in matters pertaining to taxes. Now for the greatest man among them to speak to him in a friendly way and to have the honor of having him as a guest made that a great and glad day to Zacchaeus, the greatest day of his life. At the bidding of Jesus "he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully." He would provide for Jesus the best he had, and would naturally want his fellow publicans to share his joy. As he was a chief publican, it is very likely that these publicans served under him. He knew it was useless to invite the Pharisees into his house; no Pharisee would enter the house of a publican. Jesus knew they would criticize him for going into the home of Zacchaeus; but no amount of criticism would turn Jesus from doing what was right. In the sight of a Pharisee every publican was a sinner, and every sinner was an outcast religiously and socially. And so they criticized Jesus. He often astonished them by disregarding their religious and social standards. On this occasion Jesus really invited himself to go home with a publican, "a man that is a sinner."

Salvation Comes to the Home of Zacchaeus (Verses 8-10)

The student will recognize that we have only a brief report of what was said and done on that occasion. Jesus had gone to that home because Zacchaeus was a man that he could help; he could do

nothing for these self-righteous Pharisees, and they were therefore left out of consideration. No use to cast pearls before swine. Evidently Jesus did some teaching in that home—enough to make a profound impression on Zacchaeus. "And Zacchaeus stood." Perhaps he arose during the meal. As he had an important statement to make, he respectfully stood while making it. "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor." He here seems to have been stating what he was in the habit of doing. "And if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold." The Jew had no citizen rights; so, if a publican exacted more taxes under some false claim or charge, the wronged Jew could do little about it. Zacchaeus does not really confess that he had wrongfully exacted aught of any man; his statement seems rather an indication that he thought he might have done so. He might honestly collect more from a man than he should, and later someone might convince him that he had done so. In such cases he would restore fourfold. We are told that a Roman law required this. Whether he was stating a custom of his or a resolution, his statement shows a right spirit. A resolution to undo wrongs is a mark of true repentance. If a man is not willing to do what he can to undo the wrongs he has done to others, he has not repented. He will not continue to profit off what he has gained from others by dishonest means. Because Zacchaeus showed a right spirit, and because he was a son of Abraham, Jesus said, "Today is salvation come to this house." And this statement shows that Zacchaeus was in earnest in what he said; otherwise Jesus would not have made that statement. Jesus then stated his mission—perhaps loud enough for the Pharisees outside to hear him: "For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." This statement reveals the whole purpose, the very heart and soul, of Christianity. Jesus did not come to cause men to be lost, but to save the lost. They were lost already.

Jesus Cleanses the Temple (Verses 45, 46)

For parallel passages read Matt. 21:12-16; Mark 11:15-18. Jesus had once before driven traders out of the temple. (John 2:13-16.) Now the same business was being carried on again. The priests had charge of the temple, and likely rented space to these traders, and used for themselves the rent money. These traders could have carried on an honest and useful business, but the temple was no place for such traffic. It was God's house, a house for worship, and not a business house. But these men were not conducting an honest business. "Ye have made it a den of robbers." Now a den is a resort, a place of security and protection. These men were dealing dishonestly—robbing the people, and the temple authorities were giving them protection. The traders were secure in their robberies. And so Jesus drove them out. It does not seem that the priests had before this been so antagonistic as were the Pharisees, but this incident so enraged them that they immediately "sought how they might destroy him."

SOME REFLECTIONS

It is often said that honesty is the best policy, but that is a false proverb; for he who is honest for policy's sake is not honest at heart. A Christian must be honest because it is right in the sight

of God for him to be honest. Honesty must be his principle, not his policy.

No Christian should think of engaging in a business that is not honest and helpful to his fellow man. He cannot afford to disregard the right and the good of others, and engage in a business solely for the purpose of making money. Let him work at something honest and helpful. "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need." (Eph. 4:28.) To engage in a questionable business is hurtful to himself and the church. He owes it to God and his fellow Christians to so conduct himself that his influence will be good. He cannot be honest, if he robs another of his good character, or even of his good name. It is plain therefore that a slanderer is a robber, and so is one whose influence is bad. Let us not rob another of anything—goods, name, or character.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Different ways to rob people.
How we may rob God.
Some businesses that Christians cannot engage in.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
Discuss the notion about "the moral law" and "the ceremonial law."
Name some things that are naturally wrong.

Verse 15

What is stealing?
Under the law, what were the penalties for stealing?
What were the two great commandments of the law?

Lev. 19:11, 13

Discuss these verses.

Luke 19:1, 2

What was a publican?
What is said of Zacchaeus?

Verses 3, 4

What is said of the crowds?
How did Zacchaeus manage to see Jesus?

Verses 5-7

How did Jesus come to be in the home of Zacchaeus?
What did the Pharisees say about the visit of Jesus with Zacchaeus?

Verses 8-10

Why could not Jesus do anything for the Pharisees?
What announcement did Zacchaeus make?
What then did Jesus say?
Why are people lost?

Verses 45, 46

Discuss these verses.
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IX—November 28, 1943

TRUTHFULNESS AT ALL TIMES

Ex. 20:16; 23:1, 7; Matt. 5:33-37; John 8:42-45

16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

1 Thou shalt not take up a false report: put not thy hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.

7 Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.

33 Again, ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God;
 35 Nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.
 36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black.
 37 But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one.

42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me.
 43 Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word.
 44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof.
 45 But because I say the truth, ye believe me not.

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

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rev. 22:10-17.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

November 22. M	False Witness Forbidden (Ex. 20:16; 23:1, 7)
November 23. T	Perjury Forbidden (Matt. 5:33-37)
November 24. W	Gehazi's Sin (2 Kings 5:20-2?)
November 25. T	The Sin of Lying (Acts 5:1-11)
November 26. F	God Hates Falsehood (Prov. 6:16-19)
November 27. S	God Loves Truthfulness (1 Sam. 3:10-18)
November 28. S	True Children of God (John 8:42-47)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For Exodus references, Usher's date is 1491 B.C.; for Matthew 5:33-37, probably A.D. 28; for John 8:42-45, A.D. 29 or 30.

Places.—Sinai, Galilee, and Jerusalem.

Persons.—Jehovah, the children of Israel, Jesus, his disciples, the multitudes, and the Jews in Jerusalem.

Lesson Links.—It has always been wrong to give false testimony. It has always been wrong to lie. A lie is defined to be a falsehood told or acted to deceive. It is a vicious lie when told to pervert justice or to damage someone. Even in court and under oath men will give false testimony. One need only to hear a few trials in court to know that much false swearing is done. "Jehovah, who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh truth in his heart; he that slandereth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his friend, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor; in whose eyes a reprobate is despised, but who honoreth them that fear Jehovah; he that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not." (Psalm 15:1-4.) A true man will give true testimony, even if it is against his cause. Lie not—few liars reform, and none can be saved. Of course, the man who repents of lying is no longer a liar.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Ninth Commandment (Verse 16)

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." With the Hebrews a neighbor was another Hebrew. A Hebrew therefore

was commanded not to bear false witness against another Hebrew who was on trial. There are commands in what is sometimes called the ceremonial law that are of a higher standard than this ninth commandment, in that they require truth to be told whether it be for or against the neighbor. Look closely at the ninth commandment—what really does its wording prohibit? Merely that one bear no false witness against his neighbor. The commandment does not prohibit giving false testimony in favor of the neighbor. Other precepts of the law condemn all false testimony, and therefore set forth a higher grade of morals than does the ninth commandment. "Ye shall not swear by my name falsely, and profane the name of thy God: I am Jehovah." (Lev. 19:12.) In giving testimony they were not to be swayed by the multitude, neither were they to give false testimony in order to favor a poor man, nor to oppress him. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to turn aside after a multitude to wrest justice: neither shalt thou favor a poor man in his cause." "Thou shalt not wrest the justice due to thy poor in his cause." (Ex. 23:2, 3, 6.) If a man testified falsely against another, the judges before whom the false testimony was given were to make diligent inquiry into the matter: "and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and have testified falsely against his brother; then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to do unto his brother: so shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee." (Deut. 19:18, 19.) That would be an effective penalty to assess against a false witness. And there were false prophets, who pretended to speak by inspiration, but were speaking their own notions; no baser lying than this could be done. (Deut. 18:20.) The sad thing is that people sometimes want to hear false teaching instead of the truth. "For it is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of Jehovah; that say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits." (Isa. 30:9, 10.) "A wonderful and horrible thing is come to pass in the land: the prophets prophecy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so." (Jer. 5:30, 31.) No government can long stand when such conditions prevail. One of the things which Jehovah hates is "a false witness that uttereth lies." (Prov. 6:16-19.)

A False Report—a False Matter (Ex. 23:1, 7)

Because of our relationship with one another here in this world, some things have always been right, and certain things have always been wrong, and will continue to be so. The law of Moses did not establish such relationships, nor did these relationships cease when the law of Moses came to an end. The law of Moses established penalties for a disregard of these relationships; these penalties were of force among the Hebrews only, and only so long as the law was of force. It has never been right to tell a lie, nor to help circulate one. A lie would not travel very fast, if its circulation depended entirely on the one who invented it. When we help circulate an evil, or false, report, we put our "hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness." "Keep thee far from a false matter." Take no part in a false report—have nothing to do with any false thing. If you will read verses 6-9, you will see that verse seven has to do with legal matters, Have nothing to do with helping to prosecute an innocent

and righteous man, in an effort to have such condemned to death. Even a lawyer who will do his best to get sentence against an innocent man is no better than any other murderer. A decent regard for the rights of others would go far toward making this world a better place in which to live. Let no one therefore be a party to the injury of an innocent person.

"Swear Not at All" (Matt. 5:33-37)

To forswear one's self is to commit perjury. On the matter of swearing McGarvey has this to say: "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 thy head'—were all unauthorized by the law. Moreover, it was taught by the scribes that these oaths, and all others which did not include the name of God, had not the binding force of an oath. The universal prohibition, 'Swear not at all, is distributed by the specification of these four forms of oaths, and is, therefore, most strictly interpreted as including only such oaths. Jesus surely did not intend to abolish now, in advance of the general abrogation of the law, those statutes of Moses which allowed, and in some instances required, the administration of an oath. (See Ex. 22:11; Num. 5:19.) What we style the judicial oaths of the law of Moses, then, were not included in the prohibition. This conclusion is also reached when we interpret the prohibition in the light of authoritative examples. God himself, 'because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself' in confirming the promise to Abraham (Heb. 6:13); and he did the same in declaring the priesthood of Christ. (Heb. 7:21.) Jesus answered to an oath before the Sanhedrin—Caiaphas administering the oath in the form: 'I adjure thee by the living God.' (Matt. 26:63.) Paul also made oath to the Corinthian church saying: 'I call upon God for a witness upon my soul, that to spare you I forbore to come unto Corinth.' (2 Cor. 1:23. See also Rom. 1:9; Gal. 1:20; Phil. 1:8; 1 Cor. 15:31; Rev. 10:5, 6.) We conclude, then, that judicial oaths, and oaths taken in the name of God on occasions of solemn religious importance, are not included in the prohibition; but as these are the only exceptions found in the scriptures, we conclude that all other oaths are forbidden." The language seems clearly to prohibit only the kinds of oaths mentioned. It is said that the Jews were much given to swearing all sorts of frivolous oaths, and that the people of that country are yet guilty of such profanity. They thought it wrong to swear these light oaths in the name of God, but all right in common conversation to swear these oaths that Jesus here prohibits. They did not regard such oaths as really binding. Jesus shows them that the heaven was God's throne, and the earth was his footstool, and that Jerusalem was the city of the great king—God's presence was manifested in the temple in Jerusalem. Because of the relationship of all these things to God, they were too sacred to be invoked in all sorts of light and frivolous oaths. And it would be foolish for one to swear by his own head. In Matt. 23:16-22 Jesus exposes some more foolish notions the Jews had about swearing. "But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one." This indicates that Jesus was condemning the habit of swearing in their speech—their conversations. It is a disgusting habit that has a strong hold on many people now.

It is crude, unnecessary, and sinful. Trying to emphasize one's words by profanity is folly; such profanity adds nothing to the truth of what one says, but detracts from it. It certainly does not make anyone's conversation any more entertaining. It is in no sense a social or a business asset.

Jesus Came from God (John 8:42, 43)

As the fame of Jesus spread, the Pharisees and scribes became more and more determined in their opposition to him. He was in their way; they had been used to be looked to for guidance, but Jesus did not go to them for information on any subject. The scribes and the Pharisees had been exercising great influence over the people. Their hold on the people had to be broken, as much so as their teaching needed to be met. To break their hold on the people, Jesus showed them up to be selfish hypocrites. Verse 41: "Ye do the works of your father." Then Jesus gives them to understand that he did not regard God as their Father. "If God were your Father, ye would love me." They hated him with an intense hatred. Repeatedly Jesus said that God sent him. John 3:16, 17 tells why God sent him into the world. "For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (John 6:38.) But these scribes and Pharisees had their minds so set on the way they felt sure things would be that they could not even understand the words of Jesus. Their thoughts were on material things, and he spoke to them of spiritual things. They could hear his voice as he spoke to them, but they could not "hear" the significance of anything he said. They had closed their eyes and stopped their ears against any such teaching as he was doing. They therefore could not hear with understanding.

"Ye Are of Your Father the Devil" (Verses 44, 45)

He had just told them that God was not their Father; now he tells them plainly who their father is. It is a severe indictment against them personally. Jesus was not exposing their teaching, but their character. The surest way to keep them from misleading the people was to show that they were unworthy of confidence. Even now sometimes the most effective way to keep unworthy people from misleading people is to show that they are unworthy of confidence. Jesus did that very thing, and so did Paul, and so did John. Let us not now by our theories and practices condemn what they did. "The lusts of your father it is your will to do." Jesus said such things to and about these hypocrites, and not about the people who were being deceived. The devil was a murderer from the beginning—the author of all murders. There is no good in him, for there is no truth in him. He does not have to wait for others to start lies for him to circulate; he is the father of all lies and liars. If a man's heart is not true, he will not speak truth; neither will he accept the truth of God. In another place Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things: and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." (Matt. 12:34, 35.) "But the things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false

witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man." (Matt. 15:18-20.) What the mouth speaks is determined by what the heart thinks. A man's attitude toward the truth of God has a lot to do with his regard for his own word. And if he has no regard for his own word, he is not likely to have much regard for the word of God. It is a fine thing to cultivate hospitality for truth.

SOME REFLECTIONS

"A faithful witness will not lie; but a false witness uttereth lies." (Prov. 14:5.) Jesus Christ is called the faithful witness. (Rev. 1:5.)

Christianity is the only system of religion or philosophy that sets forth a perfect code of morals. There is not a virtue that it does not cultivate, nor a moral evil that it does not condemn; and it presents motives as high as heaven and as deep as hell, to move people to attain its ideals. It gives people a high regard for truth and a keen sense of personal responsibility.

"Lying lips are an abomination to Jehovah; but they that deal truly are his delight." (Prov. 12:22.) "A lying tongue hateth those whom it hath wounded; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin." (Prov. 26:28.) The slanderer becomes an enemy of the one he has slandered; he feels that that sort of attitude justifies him in what he has done. A flatterer is a lying hypocrite. But the rewards for truthfulness and the wages of lying should banish all lying from our lips. Of course, the slanderer is a liar, a base sort of liar. His tongue is deadly poison in any community. If people generally had a high regard for the truth the slanderer could do little harm.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Old Testament teaching on lying.
The evils of lying prophets and lying teachers.
Evil surmising.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text. 6.

Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
Why has lying always been wrong?
Discuss Psalm 15:1-4.

Verse 16

With the Hebrews who was a neighbor?
What does the ninth commandment prohibit, and what does it not prohibit?
Discuss the scripture references given in this section.
Why is a teacher of falsehood in religion so base?
Why do false teachers get a ready hearing?

Ex. 23:1, 7

Name some things that have always been wrong.
Discuss verses 1 and 7, in the light of verses 4-

Matt. 5:33-37

The class should put in some time discussing these verses.

John 8:42, 43

Why did Jesus deal in such severe personalities?
Why was he not content with arguing against their teaching?
Why did they not understand him?

Verses 44, 45

What did Jesus call these Pharisees?
What theory and practice might we adopt that would condemn what Jesus did?
Should any one do such a thing?
Why do people lie?
Discuss Matt. 12:34, 35.
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson X—December 5, 1943

THE SIN OF COVETOUSNESS

Ex. 20:17; Luke 12:13-25

17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

13 And one out of the multitude said unto him, Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me.

14 But he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17 And he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my grain and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry.

20 But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?

21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

22 And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.

23 For the life is more than the food, and the body than the raiment.

24 Consider the ravens, that they sow not, neither reap; which have no store-chamber nor barn; and God feedeth them: of how much more value are ye than the birds!

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

GOLDEN TEXT—"Thou shalt not covet . . . anything that is thy neighbor's." (Ex. 20:17.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Luke 18:18-27.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

November	29.	M	The Command Against Covetousness (Ex. 20:17)
November	30.	T	The Sin of Covetousness (Luke 12:13-25)
December	1.	W	Human Ambition (Matt. 20:20-28)
December	2.	T	Ahab's Covetousness (1 Kings 21:1-7)
December	3.	F	The Covetousness of Judas (Matt. 26:14-16)
December	4.	S	The Root of All Evil (1 Tim. 6:6-10)
December	5.	S	The Peril of Wealth (Luke 18:18-27)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For Exodus 20:17, 1491 B. C.; for Luke 12:13-25, probably A.D. 30.

Places.—Mount Sinai, and Jerusalem or its environs.

Persons.—Jehovah, the children of Israel, Jesus, and the multitude.

Lesson Links.—To covet is to desire, to long for, to have an excessive desire. And yet a desire for things is not necessarily wrong; in fact it is right to desire some things. "But desire earnestly the greater gifts." (1 Cor. 12:31.) But when desire to possess things becomes stronger than the desire to be honest and decent morally, that is desire, or covetousness, in its bad sense. Desire is natural, but there is danger in cultivating a desire—it may become the master. A craving for other things leads to dishonesty and moral corruption. Besides, a constant desire for greater possessions

may become so intense as to keep us from enjoying what we have. When desire makes a person dishonest, or miserable, the desire should be toned down. The tenth commandment was a part of the law from which the Jews were made free, as may be seen by a careful reading of Rom. 7:1-8. Paul was not teaching a lesson on marriage and divorce, but was using the well-known marriage law to illustrate the Jews' relation to the law of Moses. The Jews were joined—married—to the law, and could not be joined, or married, to any other system of religion so long as the law was in force. To join another would be spiritual adultery, of which the Jews had been frequently guilty in their lapses into idolatry. (See Jer. 3:6-9; Ezek. 23.) They therefore could not be married—joined—to Christ till the law ended. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ; that ye should be joined to another, even to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God." (Rom. 7:4.) But what law? "Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law: for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." (Rom. 7:7.) This shows that the law from which they had been delivered included the ten commandments, for it is in the ten commandments that the command, "Thou shalt not covet," is found. It is strange with what tenacity people hold to the ten commandments, when the New Testament presents a perfect code of morals, which the ten commandments do not do.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Tenth Commandment (Verse 17)

The tenth commandment is very comprehensive, and yet it is limited. It demands no good deeds, and does not prohibit all coveting. With the Hebrews, a neighbor was another Hebrew, not a foreigner nor stranger. It does not prohibit coveting that which belongs to other peoples. The peoples in the land of Canaan were their enemies, and under the direction of Jehovah they took their lands and all their possessions. It is interesting to notice carefully the ten commandments, and see how many of them are negative—eight of them are prohibitions. In effect the fourth commandment is prohibitive, for its main purpose was to prohibit work on the seventh day. Notice the things the tenth commandment prohibits. But what good deed does it require? A man can keep the ten commandments and do nothing to help anyone but his father and his mother. But the other part of the law, the part which some call the ceremonial law, and which they say was the part that ended at the cross, contains the real moral teaching of the Old Testament, the teaching that demands helpful service to others, as has been shown in other lessons.

Jesus Not a Civil Judge (Luke 12:13, 14)

Amongst the Jews the oldest son received twice as much of the inheritance as did either of the other children, and it is said that sometimes the Oldest son tried to manage so as to get the whole inheritance into his hands. That might have been the trouble in this case, and a younger brother wanted his share. At least, one brother felt that he was being cheated out of his part of the inheritance. It is shameful that children will sometimes fuss among themselves

about the property left to them by their parents. It is hardly likely that this man thought Jesus had any official authority to adjust disputes over property, but more likely he thought the moral force of the word of so great a teacher would cause his brother to make a just settlement. He was mistaken in the mission and the work of Jesus. Jesus was then a teacher; he did not come to be a judge in legal disputes. So Jesus said to the man, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" He came to save souls, not to divide property; and to lift men above petty quarrels about material things, and to prepare them for greater riches than any earthly inheritance.

Jesus Warns Against Covetousness (Verse 15)

Having told the man that he had no legal authority to settle disputes about property, he now addresses all who were present: "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness." A man is far gone when he will rob his own brother. Had there been no covetousness, there would not have been this fuss between two brothers. There have been many family rows over property. Love in a family is too sweet and delightful to be destroyed by property; it does not seem that anyone could enjoy property that he had alienated his family in gaining. How can one live at peace with himself, if he has allowed greed to break up family unity? What is life when love, where it should bloom and fruit most luxuriantly, has withered and died? Life does not consist in the abundance of the things one possesses. Men can have much of this world's goods, and live a dreary life, and die a miserable death, and be lost in the world to come. How foolish to trust in material possessions; for what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? "But godliness with contentment is great gain: for we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out; but having food and covering we shall be therewith content. 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. 6:6-10.) And thus does covetousness, which is idolatry (Col. 3:5), lead men to destruction.

The Musings of a Covetous Man (Verses 16-19)

A parable is not fiction; it is some description of an actual occurrence or material thing given to illustrate a spiritual truth; but what Jesus said about this rich fool is not really a parable. Jesus had warned his hearers against covetousness, and then told what happened to a certain rich man. In all ages there have been men like this rich man. They have much goods, and think only of their own comfort. This man had fertile lands; his harvests were great. Then it seems that he had an unusually good harvest; such a great harvest that his barns would not hold it. He had to do some thinking and planning; for the moment his riches were a burden to him. He mused in his own heart; he took counsel with himself, and, like many another fool, left God out of consideration—left God out of his plans. He would tear down his old barns, and build others large enough to take care of all his goods, so he thought. He would then say to himself, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up

for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry." He was depending OIL material things to satisfy the needs of his soul; he felt secure in his wealth. For some time now we have heard much about social security, economic security, etc. But is there such security? A regular monthly or weekly income gives security against what? After all, there is not much security in wealth or in a regular income. The rich man felt proud of the security which he fancied his wealth would give him; but he did not enjoy the many years of security which he planned. There is no real security in material things.

God Answers the Rich Man's Musings (Verses 20, 21)

In his plans and works a man may not consider God, but he cannot leave God out; he will have the final disposal of all things. Ignoring God does not destroy him. It is neither right nor safe to make wealth the god in whom we trust; but a man does not have to be rich to make riches his god. Even a poor man may long for the day to come when he can do as this rich man did. When a man becomes so full of greed as was this rich man, or is filled with ambition to become as was this rich man, he is of no practical benefit to the world. He is a sort of make-believe man, around whom property has accumulated. When he is dead, the world has lost nothing of value, for his property remains in the world; the things he valued most he leaves behind. To all who trust in riches—to every covetous man, God will sooner or later say, "Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?" And whose they shall be will determine what use will be made of them. That is one thing that bothered Solomon: "And I hated all my labor wherein I labored under the sun, seeing that I must leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he will be a wise man or a fool? yet will he have rule over all my labor wherein I have labored, and wherein I have showed myself wise under the sun. This also is vanity." (Eccles. 2:18, 19.) And it so happened that the man who had rule over all that Solomon had built was a fool, a fool in that he wrecked the kingdom. Any man is a fool if he trusts in riches for happiness and security. Solomon himself trusted too much in worldly glory and material prosperity. Toward the close of his life he found that worldly glory and prosperity did not bring happiness and security. The things he had so gloried in turned out to be so disappointing to him that life soured on him, so much so that he said, "So I hated life, because the work that is wrought under the sun was grievous unto me; for all is vanity and a striving after wind." (Eccles. 2:17.) A man may lay up great riches, but when he dies, "whose shall they be?" In the eyes of the world a man may be very wise, and yet God may call him a fool. "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also." (Matt. 6:19-21.)

"Be Not Anxious" (Verses 22-25)

Jesus draws a lesson from the rich man's folly and fate. To do our duty, to work for an honest living, is required of all of us. When we do our duty, we should then serenely trust God for results. Anxiety and worry do no one any good, but really unfit him for the best work. It is true that God feeds the ravens, but they must gather their own food. The ravens and other birds live the life God made them to live; they depart not from their appointed lot in life. Of course, we cannot live as do ravens, but in one way we can, like they, live the life God intended us to live. If we do that, we need not be anxious about what we shall eat or wear. Anxiety does not increase one's income, but may destroy one's health and soul. "And that which fell among the thorns, these are they that have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection." (Luke 8:14.) Anxiety does not increase one's income, does not lengthen one's life, but is a painful emotion. Jesus refers to riches as deceitful. (Matt. 13:22.)

SOME REFLECTIONS

"Ye cannot serve God and mammon." It is impossible to serve two masters.

Riches are uncertain; they may depart from us while we live, and we will certainly depart from them when we die.

Many a man thinks his wealth makes him important, and many people think a rich man is important; but if a man is not important without wealth, he is not important with it. When a man has that idea about wealth, he is a spoiled man. It makes of him and his family snobs, and makes them of less importance than they would otherwise be. They are not all so; for some people can be wealthy and still be human and sympathetic. It is not what a man has, but what he is, that makes him important. Jesus was the most important person that ever walked among men, yet he had not where to lay his head. (Matt. 8:20.) Next to Jesus in importance was Paul the apostle; and yet he gave up all earthly possessions as but refuse that he might gain Christ. (Phil. 3:7-9.) There was no covetousness in them.

A slave cannot very well be of service to any but his master. When a man becomes a slave to his greed for gain, he cannot be a servant of God nor of use to man. He is more likely to oppress man than to help him. To this class James says, "Come now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver are rusted; and their rust shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire." (James 5:1-3.) Wealth can be made a useful servant, or it may be allowed to become a cruel taskmaster. In the hands of an unrighteous man, it may become very oppressive.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Money—its uses and abuses.

How the love of money leads to sin.

How to make money a blessing to its possessor and to others.

How wealth deceived the church at Laodicea. (Rev. 3:14-22.)

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.

What is covetousness?

When is desire wrong?

Show that the tenth commandment is a part of the law which was done away.

Verse 17

Repeat the tenth commandment, and give its limitations.

What helpful service is required in the ten commandments?

Luke 12:13, 14

What request was made, and how did Jesus dispose of it?

Verse 15

Repeat the admonition Jesus gave.

What evils may result from a family inheritance?

Discuss I Tim. 6:6-10.

Verses 16-19

Tell about the rich man.

Wherein was his failure?

Verses 20, 21

Does ignoring God leave him out of one's life?

What did God say to the rich man?

What account is such a man to the world?

What did Solomon say about the things he had accomplished?

Why did life sour on him?

What did Jesus say about treasures?

Verses 22-25

What did Jesus say about being anxious?

What rather should we do?

How may wealth be hurtful, and how useful?

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XI—December 12, 1943

CHRIST'S NEW COMMANDMENT

Mark 12:28-34; John 13:34, 35; 15:10-14

28 And one of the scribes came, and heard them questioning together, and knowing that he had answered them well, asked him, What commandment is the first of all?

29 Jesus answered, The first is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God, the Lord is one:

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.

31 The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

32 And the scribe said unto him, Of a truth, Teacher, thou hast well said that he is one; and there is none other but he:

33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is much more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.

34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

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.

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

12 This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14 Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you.

GOLDEN TEXT—"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (John 13:34.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 John 4:7-16.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

December	6.	M	Christ's New Commandment (Mark 12:28-34)
December	7.	T	Keeping Christ's Commandment (John 15:10-14)
December	8.	W	Brotherly Love (1 John 4:7-16)
December	9.	T	Good for Evil (Matt. 5:43-48)
December	10.	F	True Neighborliness (Luke 10:25-37)
December	11.	S	The Pre-eminence of Love (Gal. 5:13-15)
December	12.	S	Christ's Sacrificial Love (Rom. 5:1-8)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For Mark 12:28-34, Tuesday of crucifixion week; the selections from John were spoken the night in which Jesus was betrayed.

Place.—Jerusalem.

Persons.—Jesus, a scribe who was a lawyer, and the apostles.

Lesson Links.—The enemies of Christ continued to grow more determined and antagonistic. It seems that the priests had not been so antagonistic till he cleansed the temple. His enemies wanted to put him to death, but they feared the multitude. They frequently tried to get him to say something that would either turn the multitude against him, or else to find something that would cause the Roman authorities to take charge of him. Antagonistic parties united in their efforts to get rid of him. The Pharisees did not think it was right to pay taxes to the Roman government; but, of course, they had to do so. The Herodians were in favor of paying the taxes and of submission to the Romans. They were therefore enemies, but they united in their opposition to Jesus. Together they framed a question that they felt sure would get Jesus into trouble: "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?" By "lawful" they meant according to the law of Moses. If he said it was lawful, they felt sure the most of the Jews would turn against him; if he said it was not lawful to pay such tribute, they would have a serious charge to make against him before the Roman governor. That was as clever a scheme as they had ever thought up, but Jesus so replied to them as to leave them nothing to say. Then the Sadducees had a question. They were materialists, and did not believe there would be a resurrection. Doubtless they had silenced the Pharisees many times with this same question. A woman had married and lost by death seven husbands. Now, said they, "In the resurrection whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife." The answer Jesus gave made them feel that their question grew out of their ignorance, rather than out of their shrewdness. Read verses 13-27.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Great Commandment of the Law (Verses 28-30)

The way Jesus met the question of the Sadducees should have pleased the Pharisees, though the ease with which Jesus met the problem of the Sadducees was a sort of a reflection on the Pharisees; for he in a few words showed the ignorance of the Sadducees in the matter, a thing the Pharisees had not been able to do. One

of the scribes, whom Matthew calls a lawyer, heard Jesus answer the Sadducees, and was pleased with the answer Jesus gave. Being himself a Pharisee, he naturally told the other Pharisees. Matthew says, "But the Pharisees, when they heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, gathered themselves together." They held a council. This same scribe who told them about how easily Jesus disposed of the problem the Sadducees presented to him must have been the one sent to see if they could not show him to be ignorant of the law. They knew he was a Galilean, and had not been instructed by their great teachers. But the lawyer did not go to Jesus in a spirit of antagonism. In New Testament usage a lawyer was not an attorney, as with us, but one skilled in the law of Moses. These Pharisees were a determined set. They had been worsted in every effort they had made to entangle Jesus in his teaching. They knew, and acknowledged, that he had done great signs. It seems that they thought this lawyer, a man trained in the law, would be able to show that this Galilean did not know enough to be putting himself forward as a teacher; so he came with the question, "What commandment is the first of all?" He did not mean to ask which was the first commandment that was given, but which was first in importance. That was merely a test question for all commandments were meant to be obeyed—all were important, or they would not have been given. In answering the lawyer's question, Jesus first quotes the words with which Moses prefaced the great commandment. "The first is, Hear, O Israel." (See Deut. 6:4, 5.) This was not the commandment, but an exhortation to Israel to give attention to the commandment, which he was about to give. "The Lord our God, the Lord is one." He is supreme, the one God of the whole world and systems of worlds. Other nations had many gods, but Jehovah was one—the supreme director, the monarch of all. Moses called on Israel to hear what this great Jehovah had to say to them. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Heart, soul, mind, strength—that comprehends all there is in man, the emotions, the intellect, the moral and physical strength. Such a commandment demands intelligent reverence, a reverence that is guided by reason, and which leads to wholehearted submission to the will of God. All must be devoted to his service. This is the only command that is so comprehensive, the only command that includes all the other commands. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5:3.) And Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him." (John 14:21.) and so the extent of our love is measured by our keeping his commandments. There is no love in disobedience, and neither love nor respect in speaking of God's commands as nonessential.

The Second Like Unto It (Verse 31)

"The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Love your neighbor in the same way, in the same manner, as you love yourself. Seek his welfare as well as your own; do him all the good you can. It is not so much a matter of affection as of helpfulness. If you love him as you love yourself, you will not do him any

harm in any way, but you will be helpful to him materially and spiritually. "There is none other commandment greater than these." Matthew reports these additional words: "On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets." The whole law and all the teachings of the prophets were summed up in these two commandments. If a man loves God as he should, he will have no other gods, and will give faithful obedience to the one Supreme Being. If he loves his neighbor as himself, he will not defraud him, nor steal from him, nor bear false witness against him, nor covet what he has, but will treat him right and will be merciful and forbearing toward him. There could therefore be no commandment greater than these, for they include all other commands.

The Lawyer Agrees (Verses 32, 33)

For once a Pharisee agreed with the Lord's teaching: "Thou hast well said." Most likely this lawyer was surprised to hear Jesus say a thing with which he could agree. "To love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is much more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices." When the Jews ceased to love God, their sacrifices were an abomination to him. And without love, praise is mockery and worship is hypocrisy. And there is no love for God where there is no obedience to him. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination." (Prov. 28:9.)

Not Far from the Kingdom (Verse 34)

"And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom." He had a right understanding of man's relation to God and to his fellow man. He may have made many mistakes in trying to live up to the requirements of these two great commandments; but a man would better make a thousand mistakes in trying to do God's will to the uttermost of his ability than to set up his own will and way against God's will at one point. No matter how ignorant and untaught a person may be, if he is hungering and thirsting for righteousness, if he wants to know and to do God's will, he is not far from the kingdom. But to be not far from the kingdom is to be yet outside the kingdom. A drowning man may be within reach of safety, and yet drown. Only a step from the kingdom, and yet perish. Naturally we would like to know what course this lawyer took after this conversation.

A New Commandment (John 13:34, 35)

The two great commandments which we have just considered were not new commandments; they were old commandments. The new commandment requires disciples to love one another, as Jesus loved them. That is a far-reaching commandment. Consider how much Jesus loved them. He left the glories of heaven, and became the despised and persecuted Nazarene, and was now about to die for them. And we are to love one another even as he loved us. Has this command ever been obeyed? As Jesus died to save men, so have many thousands died in an effort to carry the message of salvation to the lost. They gave their lives, as Jesus did, to save others. But to love one another as we should often requires us to

go against our feelings. Certainly we must sacrifice that the needs of others be supplied. "But whoso hath the world's goods, and be-holdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?" (1 John 3:17.) We willingly make sacrifices for whatever we love. Love never flatters, but does encourage, and even rebukes when that is needed. Love seeks not her own. Paul is a striking example of what love leads people to do.

How to Abide in Christ's Love (John 15:10, 11)

The language is plain. If we do not keep Christ's commandments, we do not abide in his love. Jesus laid claims to the Father's love only because he had kept the Father's commandments. While it is said that God is love, it is also said that "our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. 12:29.) To know that we abide in the love of Christ should produce great joy in our hearts. How may this joy come to us? "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full"—joy made full by words. Joy is not therefore produced by some mysterious direct work of the Holy Spirit on the heart. We learn of the love of Christ, and what he has done for us, and how we may abide in his love, and we rejoice.

The New Commandment Repeated (Verses 12-14)

"This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you." This was spoken the night in which Jesus was betrayed. In stating the extent of his love, he of necessity included his death which he was about to suffer. He had already sacrificed and suffered much for them. Now that Jesus has died for us, we must understand that the commandment is still binding just as it reads. Therefore, if necessary, we must die for them, as Jesus did; that is to love one another, even 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.) Genuine love for our brethren makes us unrelenting foes to all things that tend to do harm to faith and obedience. Nothing is so hurtful as sin, and love makes us fight sin. It arrays us against all false teaching, for false teaching is hurtful. Jesus and Paul are shining examples of the fight against sin and false teaching that love for God and man should lead a Christian to make. They lost their lives to save others. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Many a man has put himself in perilous places to save others from physical injury or death, and not infrequently a man has lost his life in so doing. Jesus laid down his life for his friends, and did more. "For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:6-10.) Christ died for his enemies—died even for those who clamored for his death, and for those who nailed him to the cross. We read that Abraham was called the friend of God. (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23.) That exalted relationship is within our reach. Said our Lord, "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command

you." There is no neutral ground. A person is either a friend of Christ or an enemy. "He that is not with me is against me." (Matt. 12:30.) If we obey Christ, we are his friends; if we are not his friends, if we do not obey him, we are his enemies. To disobey any of his commands and to speak lightly of them marks such a one as an enemy of Christ, no matter what his pretensions may be. Singing his praises is not a satisfactory substitute for obedience to his commands.

SOME REFLECTIONS

"Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." That could not be true, if the kingdom is yet in the future. If it is yet future, that scribe was more than nineteen hundred years from it! Had you thought of that? Ponder its significance.

Christ supplanted Moses. His religion did not supplement the Jews' religion; his religion set the Jews' religion aside. Some of the commands of Moses are as enduring as the human family, and were binding before Moses gave any laws. These are a part of the law of Christ. And yet Christ gave some new commandments. The command to love our brother as Christ loved us is not the only new commandment Christ gave. Baptism in the name of Christ and the Lord's Supper are new. Can you think of others? A man is not a friend of Christ if his conduct hinders the progress of the cause of Christ. He cannot be a friend of Christ if his conduct shames the church for which Christ died. "Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" (James 4:4.)

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Moses and Christ.

"Not far from the kingdom."

What the new commandment requires.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

Give some evidence of the growing bitterness toward Christ.

Verses 28-30

What other title did the scribe mentioned here have?

What was a lawyer?

What question did he ask Jesus?

What was the purpose of the Pharisees in sending the scribe with this question?

What answer did Jesus give?

Why was this commandment the first, or greatest, of all?

What is it to love God?

Who does Jesus say loves him?

Verse 31

Discuss the second in importance.

How did the two commandments contain all the

others?

Verses 32, 33

What did the lawyer say in reply to Jesus?

Verse 34

Why was this scribe not far from the kingdom?

What should be our attitude toward the commandments of God?

John 13:34, 35

In what sense was this a new commandment?

What does the new commandment require?

John 15:10, 11

How may we abide in Christ's love, and have our joy full?

Verses 12-14

Give further discussion of the new commandment.

Why sacrifice to fight sin and false teaching?

How may we be friends of Christ?

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XII—December 19, 1943

CHRIST THE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW

Heb. 1:1-9; Rom. 10:4-10

1 God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners,

2 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;

3 Who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance. and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

4 Having become by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they.

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time,

Thou art my Son,

This day have I begotten thee? and again, I will be to him a Father, And he shall be to me a Son?

6 And when he again bringeth in the firstborn into the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels winds, And his ministers a flame of fire:

8 But of the Son he saith,

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;

And the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of thy kingdom.

9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

4 For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth.

5 For Moses writeth that the man that doeth the righteousness which is of the law shall live thereby.

6 But the righteousness which is of faith saith thus, Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down):

7 Or, Who shall descend into the abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach:

9 Because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved:

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

GOLDEN TEXT—"God . . . hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son." (Heb. 1:1, 2.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 5:1-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

December 13. M

December 14. T

December 15. W

December 16. T

December 17. F

December 18. S

December 19. S

Christ the Fulfillment of the Law (Heb. 1:1-9)

Christ Our Righteousness (Rom. 10:4-10)

Righteousness by Faith (Phil. 3:1-9)

The Fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:1-13)

Justification by Faith (Gal. 2:16-21)

Christ the Life and Light (John 1:1-9)

Christ's Pre-eminence (Col. 1:9-16)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—The Epistle to the Hebrews was evidently written before the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred A.D. 70; it was probably written about A.D. 64 or 65. The Epistle to the Romans was written about A.D. 58.

Places.—Hebrews was probably written in Rome. Romans was written at Corinth.

Persons.—It is most likely that Paul wrote Hebrews; he was the writer of Romans.

Lesson Links.—The contents of the letter to the Hebrews show clearly why that letter was written; the same reason partly prompted the writing of the letter to the Romans. The first converts after Pentecost were Jews and Jewish proselytes. They were strongly attached to the law of Moses and their traditions. They still felt the binding force of the law, not grasping the idea that Christ took the law out of the way. Not till the conversion of Cornelius did any of them think the gospel should be preached to Gentiles. Even after they learned that the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles, many of the extreme Jewish Christians contended that all Gentile converts had to be circumcised and keep the law, or they could not be saved. When there had grown up a strong church in Antioch of Syria, "certain men came down from Judaea and taught the brethren, saying, Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved." (Acts 15:1.) Paul and Barnabas knew these men were wrong, but they would not recognize Paul as an apostle; so men were sent to Jerusalem, along with Paul and Barnabas, to hear what the apostles and elders at Jerusalem would say. But after the whole body of apostles and elders, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, decided that these Judaizers were wrong, some of them kept up their contention. They disturbed churches with their contention; they became enemies of Paul because he earnestly and steadfastly fought their doctrine. The letter to the Hebrews was written to show how wrong these Judaizers were, and much of Romans was written for the same purpose. With these Judaizers the church was just another sect of the Jews' religion; the work Paul did kept them from making it so.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Jesus the Christ Now Speaks to Us (Verses 1, 2)

A clear distinction is here made between "the fathers" and "us," and between the way God communicated to them and to us. Moses the lawgiver stands pre-eminent among the prophets through whom God spoke to the fathers. The times in which God spoke to the fathers by the prophets covered many years—about a thousand years. "Divers portions" refers to the piecemeal revelations made by the prophets during the many years. "Divers manners"—he spoke by types and figures, by examples, and by speech. "At the end of these days"—at the end of the days in which God spoke to the fathers by the prophets. That period had ended, and even the Jewish nation was about to end. God now speaks to us through his Son, and his Son speaks to us through his apostles. (Luke 10:16.) "We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard." (Acts 4:20.) "But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God." (2 Cor. 5:18-20.) So then, if you want to read what God said to the fathers, read the Old Testament; if you want to read what he says to us, read the New Testament. "Heir of all things." He is the Lord of all things; in all things he has the pre-eminence. (Col. 1:18.) "Through whom also he made the

worlds." The Son was therefore the active agent through whom the Father created all things. This same truth is set forth in other places. "All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made." "He was in the world, and the world was made through him." (John 1:3, 10.) "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.) These passages help us to see the significance of the plural pronoun in Gen. 1:26; and they show that God did not just speak the worlds into existence, as some have said. He spoke, and the Son executed.

The Deity and Exaltation of the Son (Verses 3, 4)

"The effulgence of his glory," the radiation, or showing forth, of the Father's glory. "And the very image of his substance." In Col. 1:15 he is said to be "the image of the invisible God." (See also 2 Cor. 4:4.) The writer of Hebrews had just said that God now speaks to us through his Son; the things which he speaks through his Son make up what we now know as the New Testament. As a foundation for showing the superiority of the New Covenant over the Old, the writer shows the deity of its author, and therefore his superiority over all created beings. He upholds "all things by the word of his power." Neither the prophets nor angels could do that. This shows his mighty power; he controls all things. "When he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Purifying is the work of a priest, but Jesus was not a priest on earth. (Heb. 8:4.) The law ended at the cross, and Christ was made a priest "after the law." (Heb. 7:28.) On the cross he was the victim, the sacrifice. When he entered heaven he was made priest, and there offered his own blood for the purification of sins. (Heb. 9:11-14, 23-26.) God did not say to the angels, but to the Son, "Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet." (Verse 13.) He is therefore better than the angels—much higher in both his nature and authority. "He hath inherited a more excellent name than they." "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2:8-11.)

This Son and the Angels in Contrast (Verses 5-7)

Through the ministry of angels God delivered the law to Moses and the children of Israel, "who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not." (Acts 7:53.) The law was "ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator." (Gal. 3:19.) But God never did say to any angel, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Jesus is a Son in a special sense—a sense in which no human being can become a son, nor can any of the angels. This saying, "Thou art my Son," may refer to the time of his resurrection, when he was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according

to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. 1:4.) Through the prophet God declares both his Sonship and his exaltation: "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, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 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." (Isa. 9:6, 7.) And so Jehovah said, "And let the angels of God worship him." If he were a mere creature, if he were not deity, it would not be right to worship him. But let no one tell you that the Christ is not a proper object of worship. Commentators have trouble with verse 7; the one sure thing about it is that he makes angels his servants.

The Son's Throne (Verses 8, 9)

While the angels are ministers, or servants, the Son is on his throne, which, in other places, is called the throne of David. His scepter is a scepter of righteousness, that is, his reign would be a reign of righteousness. The anointing of verse 9 refers to his being anointed as king. The second chapter of Acts shows when Jesus took his seat on his throne, David's throne. Peter based an argument on the oath God had made to David, that of the fruit of his loins he would set one on David's throne; then he drew this conclusion: "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 be strange logic, in fact, no logic, for Peter to argue that God had raised up Jesus to sit on David's throne, and then draw the conclusion that God had exalted him to something else! Peter's closing exhortation settles the matter: "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.) Christ is the Greek for the Hebrew Messiah. Jesus is therefore now the Messiah.

Christ Fulfilled the Law's Aim, or End (Rom. 10:4, 5)

A variety of opinions exist as to what is meant by "the end of the law." "End" is frequently used to express the aim or purpose of a person or thing. The end, or aim, of the law was that men by keeping it might be righteous; but no one but Christ accomplished that purpose or aim. He kept the law perfectly. Also by his plan of salvation men are forgiven and thus become righteous; thus the thing the law required is accomplished by forgiving in Christ—"that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us." (Rom. 8:4.) And so Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to all believers. Through forgiveness they have what the law demanded.

"The Righteousness Which Is of Faith" (Verses 6-10)

The righteousness which is of faith is the righteousness that one attains through faith in Christ. By a faith that obeys, a person is forgiven, and thereby made righteous. This system of righteousness by faith accepts the testimony given in the gospel concerning Christ, and does not ask that Christ be brought down from heaven, so that people may see him—does not ask that he come here in person to

reign over us. Neither does it doubt that he arose from the grave; it does not therefore ask that he be brought up from the dead. "The word is nigh thee." No one need expect any evidence beyond what is already given. It is sufficient to produce the faith that saves. In verses 6-8 Paul was partly quoting the language of Moses recorded in Deut. 30:11-14, in which Moses was telling the children of Israel that the commandment was not a thing afar off, but was near them and of easy access. There is no need for Christ or any special power to come down from heaven, nor for anyone to exhibit the risen Christ again. "The word is nigh thee"—an emphatic statement that the word furnishes all that is needed. This word is planted in the heart, that it may be believed and confessed. Of course no one will confess that Jesus is the Lord Christ before he believes, and he will not believe before he receives the word in his heart. Confessing Jesus as your Lord is a pledge of obedience to him, and to believe in him is to bow to his authority and leadership. And this faith is not merely accepting him as a great teacher and reformer, but to believe in him as the Christ whom God raised from the dead. Such faith and such confession leads to salvation, and that because "the word is nigh thee." "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." But Paul's argument does not stop with verse 10. Men could not call on the Lord, unless they believed on him; they could not believe on him, if they never heard of him; they never would have heard of Christ, if God's inspired preachers had never announced the gospel. "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." (Verse 17.)

SOME REFLECTIONS

Not only did Christ fulfill the righteous demands of the law and make it possible for the same demands to be fulfilled in the believers in him, but he also fulfilled its types and shadows. The whole law centered in Christ—he was the end, or aim, of it all.

Christ, not Moses, is the author of our faith, the author of the new and living way. (Heb. 10:20; 12:1, 2.) The man who does not know the difference between the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ, between the Old Testament and the New Testament, will never have a clear conception of God's plan of salvation. "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Heb. 10:9, 10.)

Christ is the only hope of the world. The world was lost; Jesus came to save it. "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.) The gospel is God's power for saving lost men. (Rom. 1:16.) But Christ will save no one in whose heart he is not allowed to reign as king. The proclamation of pardon in the name of Christ was first announced in Jerusalem on Pentecost. There and then remission in the name of Christ was first announced. (Luke 24:46, 47; Acts 2:38.) That was the beginning of the reign of Christ.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

When the law of Moses ceased to be binding.
 When the reign of Christ began.
 The condition of man without Christ.
 The law and the gospel contrasted.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
 Who were the first converts to Christianity?
 Discuss their devotion to the law of Moses, and its results.
 Discuss Paul's fight against the Judaizers.

Verses 1, 2

Repeat and discuss these verses.
 Show from other passages who was the active agent in creation.

Verses 3, 4

What shows that the Son was more than mere man?
 Discuss the terms as here applied to the Son.
 Discuss Phil. 2:8-11.

Verses 5-7

What is the point in showing the superiority of the Son over the angels?
 Read and discuss Isa. 9:6, 7.

Verses 8, 9

Elsewhere what is the Son's throne called?
 When was he seated on this throne?

Rom. 10:4, 5

Discuss the term, "the end of the law."
 How did Christ fulfill the law?

Verses 6-10

What is the righteousness which is of faith?
 Read and discuss in detail each of verses 6-10.
 What further point does Paul make concerning faith?
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XIII—December 26, 1943

GOD'S GREAT LOVE AND HIS GIFT

Matt. 2:1-12

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

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

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

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

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

6 And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah,

Art in no wise least among the princes of Judah:

For out of thee shall come forth a governor,

Who shall be shepherd of my people Israel.

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

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

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

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

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

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

GOLDEN TEXT—"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. 9:1-7.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

December 20. M	The Babe of Bethlehem (Matt. 2:1-12)
December 21. T	Messianic Property (Isa. 9:1-7)
December 22. W	God's Love for Us (Rom. 8:31-39)
December 23. T	God's Gift to All (John 3:16-21)
December 24. F	Honoring God by Our Gifts (Mark 12:41-44)
December 25. S	Manifesting Our Love (John 14:15-21)
December 26. S	Sharing God's Gift (Matt. 28:18-20)

LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—No one knows the date of the birth of Jesus, but it is generally understood that it could not have been the twenty-fifth day of December. That would be the cold, rainy season; and shepherds would not have been out in the open country watching their flocks by night at that season. It is now known that Abbot Dionysius Exiguus, whose figures were accepted for a long time, missed the year of his birth by at least four years. However, there is not full agreement amongst chronologists as to the year of his birth; but it is most generally accepted that he was born four years earlier than our present method of dating indicates. It makes early chronology seem awkward, and even contradictory. If we keep this in mind it is not so hard to see that Jesus was born 4 B.C.; that is, four years before our present method of dating began.

Places.—Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Bethlehem is a city of Judah, six miles south of Jerusalem, on the road to Hebron. It is one of the old cities of the world, dating back to, or even beyond, the days of Jacob, and has had a continued existence to the present time.

Persons.—The child Jesus, his mother Mary, the Magi, King Herod, and the chief priests and scribes.

Lesson Links.—The prophecies concerning the coming of a redeemer, the Messiah, had stirred in the hearts of the oppressed Jews a high state of expectancy. A state of expectancy also prevailed among other peoples who had an acquaintance with the Jewish prophets. In preparing this lesson the student should read Luke 1 to 2:39. Though Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth of Galilee, circumstances made it necessary for them to be in Bethlehem when Jesus was born. "Now it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be enrolled And all went to enroll themselves every one to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David; to enrol himself with Mary, who was betrothed to him, being great with child. And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." (Luke 2:1-7.) All the room in the inn had been taken up before Joseph and Mary arrived at Bethlehem: Jesus was cir-

circumcised the eighth day. Thirty-three days later "they brought him up to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord." The visit of the Magi must have been after this, for Joseph and Mary started to Egypt immediately after the visit of the Magi.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The Quest of the Magi (Verses 1, 2)

"Wise-men" of our text is a translation of the word Magi; the singular number of the word is Magus, and is found in Acts 13:6, 8, where it is translated sorcerer. The Magi are said to have been a class of learned men of the countries of the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers; they claimed to possess certain powers not possessed by other men. Their country was a long distance east of Jerusalem. The star was not in an easterly direction from them when they saw it, but they in the east saw the star. The appearance of an unusual star would excite their interest, but would not of itself reveal to them that a king of the Jews had been born. We are not told how God revealed to them the significance of the star; neither are we told why these men in that distant country would have any special interest in the fact that a king had been born in Judea. God must have revealed to them that this king would not be such a king as the Jews expected; a king merely for the Jews would be of no special interest to them. Of these matters we cannot be sure; but we do know that these men were called Magi, and that they had come from the east, being guided by a star, and that they knew that a king had been born in Judea. The Herod of our lesson is the one whom Josephus called Herod the Great. He was a forceful character, but a bloody tyrant, putting to death any of whom he became suspicious, even his own wife and sons—a bloody tyrant was he. He was king of Judea by the appointment of the Roman emperor, but was allowed great freedom in the management of all local affairs. But as he was king of Judea, it was natural for the Magi to suppose that the new king would be born in the royal family. They therefore expected to find the newborn king in Jerusalem; but in this expectation they were following their own notions, instead of the star; for it is certain that the star did not lead them to the house of Herod. Too often people allow their own reasonings and notions to turn them aside from divine guidance. It seems that these men expected the men of Jerusalem to know about this newborn king, for they asked, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him." This statement gives support to the idea that some special revelation had been made to these men concerning the nature of the reign of this newborn king; for why should they be seeking to worship a babe that was to be no more than a king of the Jews?

The Report Stirs Jerusalem (Verse 3)

The Jews were expecting the Messiah; even Herod shared that expectation. The words of the Magi therefore stirred up great interest. It is not to be supposed that everything that was said and done on this occasion was recorded. All the inhabitants of Jerusalem would want to know about the star, and how came these men in a faraway country to know that a new king had been born in Judea. It was evident to all thoughtful people that God's hand was in the

matter; and even though Herod knew this, the report and what it implied troubled him. This shows that Herod had given full credit to the report of the Magi. At this time Herod was an old man, and it does not seem at all likely that he feared his personal reign would be interrupted by this babe. More likely he feared that royalty would pass from his family to another. His friends and supporters, most likely much younger than he, would fear that a new king would set them aside, or kill them to get them out of the way. Those who cared nothing for Herod would fear that war would result when an effort was made to put the new king on the throne. Hence, "when Herod the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him."

Herod Seeks More Information (Verses 4-8)

Herod was fully convinced that the Messiah whom the Jews had long expected had now been born. He knew too that the prophets had foretold the coming of the Messiah. The language of our text leaves no room to doubt that he did know of the prophecies, but he wanted one specific point settled. "And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ should be born." Had he been making that inquiry for a righteous purpose, it would have been well; for people could not afford to accept the newborn babe as the promised Messiah, unless they know that he came as the prophets foretold. Herod made the inquiry as if he had no evil designs; and yet he was laying his plans to put to death the Messiah whom God promised to send—preparing to put God's Messiah to death! Could mortal man be more presumptuous? It was not as if some one through ignorance, or weakness, or negligence had failed to live up to the requirements of God's law; it was a determination to keep God from doing what he had promised to do; it was putting his ingenuity and power up against the wisdom and power of God. Pharaoh of old had done likewise. The chief priests and the scribes were able to refer Herod to the prophecy which told where the Messiah was to be born. The prophecy they read to him is found in Mic. 5:2. They understood the ruler, which Micah plainly stated would come out of Bethlehem, would be the Messiah, the Christ. It does not seem that these chief priests and scribes took any further interest in the matter. That seeming indifference can be easily explained on the grounds that they were afraid to show a lively interest in the prospects of a new king; it might have been fatal for them to do so—they knew the cruelty of Herod's suspicious character. Having learned where the Christ was to be born, Herod turned to the Magi to find out the possible age of the newborn king. He was not seeking the information for any good, but with murderous intent. He was crafty enough to keep his designs from the Magi. It does not seem that the Magi suspected any evil designs on the part of Herod. Men who are not themselves tricky do not readily discover that trait in others. An innocent person is more easily imposed on than is a suspicious person. Herod had so long practiced deception and coldhearted cruelty that there was no sincerity in him; his conscience was seared—there was no good in him. He had, like the people before the flood, reached that stage of depravity in which every imagination of the heart was evil, and that continually. The Magi had come to worship the newborn king, and yet Herod was using

them in his murderous designs against God's Messiah; he was doing it, knowing whom he was determined to murder. He pretended to want to know all about the young child, so that he might go and worship him. It is certain that there is no more good in a man when he can be so deceiving, so cruel, and so determined to fight against God. And that man was once an innocent babe, and could have developed into a great and useful man; but by the practice of sin he had become a monster of cruelty and wickedness. The world, and even the church, is occasionally cursed by such monsters.

The Magi Find the Child Jesus and Worship Him (Verses 9-11)

Evidently the Magi were not well acquainted with the prophets of Israel, for they learned from the chief priests and scribes that the prophet Micah had foretold his birth at Bethlehem. When they departed for Bethlehem the star again became their guide. McGarvey says, "The star which they had seen in the east had evidently disappeared before they reached Jerusalem, but now it reappeared when its guidance was needed." But it is more likely that it disappeared because they yielded to a natural impulse to go to the royal family in Jerusalem to seek for the newborn king, instead of following the star. Divine guidance ceased when they ceased to follow divine guidance. When they decided to follow the light God gave them through the prophet, the star added its guidance. That was not one of the regular stars of the heavens, for one of the constant stars of the heavens would have had no special significance to these men of the east. Besides, such a star would have seemed to stand over one house the same as any other house, or over Jerusalem the same as over Bethlehem. And on account of the earth's revolutions, can any one figure out how one of the regular stars would have seemed to travel in a westerly direction? And that star was low enough for the Magi to determine the exact house in Bethlehem; it went before them till it stood over a certain house, so that they knew, without making any inquiry, the exact house to enter. Hence, the public knew nothing of their visit. That a special star guided these men is no more a matter of wonder than that a cloud should guide the Hebrews in the wilderness. The Magi entered the house over which the star stood. It will be noticed that they entered a house. It had been several weeks since Jesus was born; Joseph and Mary had taken up their abode in some house. These men had not worshiped Herod, though he was a reigning king, but they considered, from all that they had known and experienced, that this babe was a proper object of worship; "and they fell down and worshipped him; and opening their treasures they offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh."

The Magi Disregarded Herod's Bidding (Verse 12)

Herod had said to the Magi, "Go and search out exactly concerning the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word, that I also may come and worship him." It is likely that they fully intended to do so; but after they had worshiped the child and had retired for the night, God warned them in a dream not to return to Herod. It appears that they departed immediately for their own country another way. No one therefore could have given Herod

any information about them. The same night Joseph was warned to flee to Egypt with the young child and its mother. None therefore knew where they had gone. From verse 16 we learn that Herod was greatly enraged at being mocked by the Magi. He had been used to having his way.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Because Matthew mentions some things not mentioned by Luke, and Luke mentions some things not mentioned by Matthew, we are likely to become confused as to the order of events. But this seems to have been the order of events: Jesus was born, circumcised the eighth day, presented at the temple thirty-three days later (Lev. 12; Luke 2:22-24), the visit of the Magi, the flight into Egypt. As they left for Egypt immediately after the visit of the Magi, the presentation at the temple could not have occurred after the visit of the Magi.

Before Jesus was born the angel announced his mission in few words: "For it is he that shall save his people from their sins." Jesus did not come to save the Jews from Roman rule. The scope of his mission is seen in the word "whosoever": "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.) The world was lost without him.

TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The song of the angels. (Luke 2:13, 14.)
What if Jesus had not come? John 3:14-17.
The Herods.

QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found, and repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.
How came Joseph and Mary to be at Bethlehem when Jesus was born?
What rooming facilities did they find at Bethlehem?
What two additional incidents does Luke mention concerning the babe?

Verses 1, 2

Who were the Magi?
How came they to be in Jerusalem?
Who was Herod?

Verse 3

Why would the report of the Magi stir Jerusalem?

Verses 4-8

What did Herod ask of the priests and scribes?
What answer did they give, and why?
What did Herod ask of the Magi?
Discuss his depravity.

Verses 9-11

Why had the Magi gone to Jerusalem seeking the newborn king?
Why do you think the star had for a time disappeared?
How can we know that this was not a regular star?
How did the Magi know the exact house to enter?

Verse 12

What was revealed to the Magi at Bethlehem?
What also was revealed to Joseph?
Discuss the reflections.