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## **A FOREWORD**

In penning the last word of this, the twenty-third 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. 27:57. A city of Judea.

Aristarchus (the best ruler), Acts 20:4. A companion of Paul on his third missionary journey.

Asa (physician, healer), 2 Chron. 14:8. Third king of Judea; reigned forty years.

Ashpenaz (horse-nose), Dan. 1:3. Master of eunuchs.

Asia ( ), Acts 19: 26. Continent, also Roman Province.  
Athens (city of Athena), Acts 17:21. The capital of Attica, and the chief city of Grecian learning.  
Augustus (venerable), Luke 2:1. The first Roman emperor.  
Azotus (Ashdod, a stronghold), Acts 8:40. City nearly midway between Gaza and Joppa.

## B

Baal (owner or lord), Num. 22:41, The male god of the Phenician and Canaanitish nations.  
Babel (confusion), Gen. 10:10; 11:1-9. Tower built on the Plain of Shinar.  
Babylon (from Babel), 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), i 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), I 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.  
 Demonic, 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. Jewish wife of King Ahasuerus.  
 Etam (lair of wild beasts), Judges 15:8. Place visited by Samson.  
 Ethiopia (burnt faces), Acts 8:27. The country south of Egypt.  
 Eunuch (bed keeper), Acts 8:34. A man deprived of his virility.  
 Euodias (fragrance), Phil. 4: 2. Christian woman at Philippi.  
 Euraquilo, Acts 27:14. Compounded from two words meaning east and north.  
 Eutyclus (fortunate), Acts 20:9. A youth of Troas who went to sleep and fell out the window. Paul restored him to life.  
 Eve (life), Gen. 2:21. Name given to the first woman.  
 Exodus (a going out). Name given to the second book of the Bible.  
 Exorcist (casting out), Matt. 12:27. One who pretended to cast out evil spirits.  
 Ezekiel (God is strong or God doth strengthen), Ezek. 1:3. The third of the major prophets.  
 Ezra (help), Neh. 12:1. Wrote the book which bears his name.

## F

Felix (happy), Acts 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 Elikanah, and mother of Samuel.

Hazael (whom God sees), 2 Kings 8:7-15. A king of Damascus, anointed by Elisha.

Heber (alliance), Gen. 46:17. Grandson of Asher.

Hebrew (from Eber, beyond, or on the other side), Gen. 14:13. Posterity of Abraham.

Hebron (alliance). Josh. 15:54. City about twenty miles south of Jerusalem.

Hell (Gehenna), Matt. 5:22. Place of torment for the wicked.

Hellenist (Grecian), Acts 6:1. Term applied to Greek-speaking Jews, or Grecian Jews.

Herod (hero like), Luke 3:19. The Herod family were alien by race and Jewish in faith; Roman rulers over Palestine.

Herodians (from Herod), Matt. 22:15. Party among the Jews who were supporters of the Herodian family.

Herodias (from Herod), Matt. 14:8-11. Granddaughter of Herod the Great.

Hezekiah (Jehovah strengtheneth), 2 Kings 18:5. Thirteenth king of Judah and son of Ahaz.

Hierapolis (holy city), Col. 4:13. A city of Phrygia.

Hiram, 2 Sam. 5:11. The king of Tyre, who sent workmen and material to help build the temple.

Hittites (descendants of Heth), Josh. 9:1. One of the Canaanitish tribes.

Hophni, 1 Sam. 2:12. One of the wicked sons of Eli.

Horeb (desert), Ex. 3:1. A mountain: (See Sinai.)

Hosanna (save, pray), Matt. 21:9. The cry of the multitude on Jesus' triumphal entrance into Jerusalem.

Hosea (salvation), 2 Kings 15:30. One of the minor prophets.

Hoshea (salvation), Isa. 7:16. Same as Hosea or Joshua.

Hymeneus (belonging to Hymen, the god of marriage), 1 Tim. 1:20. He denied the true doctrine of the resurrection.

## I

Ichabod (inglorious), 1 Sam. 4:21. The son of Phineas and grandson of Eli.

Iconium, Acts 14:1. Paul visited this city with Barnabas on his first missionary tour. Located north of Antioch, in Pisidia.

Illyricum, Rom. 15:9. District lying along the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea.

Immanuel (God with us), Matt. 1:23. The name applied to Christ.

Inn (lodging place), Luke 2:7. Similar to our rooming houses or hotels.

Isaac (laughter), Gen. 35:27. The son of Sarah by Abraham.

Isaiah (Jehovah is salvation), Isa. 1:1. One of the major prophets of the Old Testament.

Ishmael (may God hear), Gen. 16:15. Son of Abraham by Hagar, the Egyptian handmaid.

Israel (persevere with God, prince of God), Gen. 32:28. Name given to Jacob and the nation which came from the twelve tribes.

Issachar (there is a reward), Gen. 30:18. The ninth son of Jacob; one of the twelve tribes.

Italy, Acts 18:2. A well-known country.

## J

Jachin (he doth establish), 1 Kings 7:21. One of the two pillars which was set up in the porch of the temple.

Jacob (supplanter), Gen. 25:26. Son of Isaac and Rebekah, twin brother of Esau.

Jambres, 2 Tim. 3:8. One of the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses.

James (the Greek form of "Jacob"), Matt. 10:2. Son of Zebedee, brother of John, and one of the twelve apostles.



Jannes, 2 Tim. 3:8. An Egyptian magician who joined Jambres in opposing Moses.

Jason, Acts 17:5. Entertained Paul and Silas; attacked by Jewish mob.

Jebusites (from Jebus), Num. 13:29. One of the Canaanitish tribes in Palestine.

Jehoiada (Jehovah knows), 2 Sam. 8:18. High priest at one time.

Jehoshaphat (Jehovah hath judged), 1 Kings 15:24. Fourth king of Judah, son of Asa.

Jehovah (I Am, the Eternal Living One), Lev. 24:15. One of the names given to God.

Jehu (Jehovah is he), 2 Kings 9:2. Founder of the fifth dynasty of the kings of Israel.

Jephunneh (it will be prepared), Num. 13:6. Father of Caleb, a good spy.

Jeremiah (whom Jehovah appoints), Jer. 1:1. One of the major prophets.

Jericho (place of fragrance), Josh. 13:16. First city destroyed by Joshua; its walls were thrown by faith.

Jeroboam (whose people are many), 1 Kings 11:28. The first king of the divided kingdom of Israel.

Jerusalem (the city of peace), 2 Chron 25:23. The religious and political capital of the Israelites.

Jesse (wealthy), Ruth 4:18-22. The father of David, and son of Obed, and the son of Boaz, by the Moabitess, Ruth.

Jesus (Jehovah is salvation), Matt. 1:21. One of the names given to Christ, the Messiah.

Jew (a man of Judah), Mark 7:3. A name applied to the members of the kingdom of Judah after the separation of the ten tribes; later applied to all Israelites.

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 Zaeharias, 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.  
 Niodemus (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.  
 Pergamm, 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.  
 Pyrrhus, Acts 20:4. The father of Sopater of Berea.

## Q

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

## R

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

Ruth (a female friend), Ruth 1:4. The Moabitess who became the wife of Boaz.

## S

Sabaoth (armies), James 5:4. Name applied to the Lord.  
Sabbath (a day of rest), Ex. 16:22. The seventh day of the week.  
Sabbath Day's Journey, Acts 1:12. About three-fourths of a mile.  
Sabbatical Year, Ex. 23:10. Each seventh year.  
Sadducees (followers of Zadok), Matt. 3:7. Religious sect opposed to the Pharisees.  
Salamis (salt), Acts 13:5. City in the eastern part of the Island of Cyprus.  
Samaria (watch mountain), 1 Kings 16:23. Name of a city thirty miles north of Jerusalem; also of the country surrounding it.  
Samaritan (watch mountain, Samaria), Luke 10:33. An inhabitant of Samaria.  
Samson (like the sun), Judges 15:20. One of the strongest men; one of the judges of Israel.  
Samuel (asked of God), 1 Sam. 3:1-18. The last judge of Israel.  
Sanhedrin (a council chamber), Matt. 26:57. The supreme court of the Jewish nation.  
Sapphira (bright color, beautiful), Acts 5:1-11. Wife of Ananias.  
Sarah (princess), Gen. 20:12. Wife of Abraham, mother of Isaac.  
Sarai (my princess), Gen. 11:29. First name of Sarah.  
Sardis (red), Rev. 1:11. A city of Asia Minor, and capital of Lydia.  
Satan (adversary), Matt. 16:23. Name applied to the devil.  
Saul (desired), 2 Sam. 1:23. Name of the first king of Israel; first name of the apostle Paul.  
Sceva (implement), Acts 19:14. A Jew residing at Ephesus when Paul visited that city.  
Scribes (to write), 1 Kings 4:3. Those who transcribed the law.  
Scythian, Col. 3:11. Name applied to the people who lived north of the Black Sea.  
Septuagint (the seventy). The Greek Version of the Old Testament.  
Sergius Paulus, Acts 13:7. Name of the proconsul of Cyprus.  
Sheba (an oath), 2 Sam. 20:1-22. Name of queen who visited Solomon.  
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.  
Troyllium, 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.

Zeruiah (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.

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## FIRST QUARTER

**THE GOSPEL OF THE SON OF GOD: STUDIES IN MARK**

*AIM: To follow Mark's vivid account of our Lord's many deeds of power and love with a view to creating and deepening the desire and purpose to be followers of Jesus and unselfish servants of our fellow men.*

Lesson I—January 2, 1944

**JESUS BEGINS HIS MINISTRY**

Mark 1:9-22

9 And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan.

10 And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him:

11 And a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.

12 And straightway the Spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness.

13 And he was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Repent ye, and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1:15.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Isa. 40:3-11.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

December 27.	M	The Beginning of the Gospel (Mark 1:1-8)
December 28.	T	Beginnings in Judaea (Mark 1:9-13)
December 29.	W	Beginnings in Galilee (Mark 1:14-22)
December 30.	T	Beginnings Among Samaritans (John 4:4-10)
December 31.	F	Beginnings Among Greeks (Mark 7:24-30)
January 1.	S	In the Beginning (John 1:1-5)
January 2.	S	"Jesus Is the Son of God" (1 John 5:1-5)

**LESSON SETTINGS**

*Time.*—The Bible deals little in exact dates. Chronologists differ as to the year in which Jesus was born, but it is generally agreed that our present method of dating was based on a wrong calculation.

It was not until the sixth century that people began to date events from the birth of Jesus, in that century a learned monk, Dionysius Exiguus, calculated the time, and people began to date events according to his count. When it was later found that he had made a wrong calculation, people had so generally accepted his dates that it was not convenient to change matters. Both Usher and Hales put the birth of Jesus four years earlier than the common reckoning. That makes the year of this lesson, according to the common count, A.D. 27 and 28.

*Place.*—The wilderness of Judaea, along the river Jordan. From Luke's account it seems that John had no fixed place for his preaching and baptizing: "And he came into all the region round about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins." (Luke 3:3.) We also have this from John: "And John also was baptizing in AEnon near to Salim, because there was much water there and they came, and were baptized." (John 3:23.) The place of the temptation of Jesus is spoken of as the wilderness. Galilee, the district where Jesus did much of his preaching, lies north of Samaria.

*Persons.*—Jesus, John the Baptist, and the people.

*Lesson Links.*—The lessons of this quarter are devoted to the teaching and deeds of Christ Jesus, as recorded by Mark; but in preparation for these studies the student should study the first three chapters of Matthew, the first three chapters of Luke, and the first chapter of John. For many years the Jews had been under Roman rule. They resented such rule, and to be forced to pay tribute to a heathen nation was especially obnoxious to them. They longed for deliverance from such bondage. They thought this deliverance would be effected by the Messiah, whose coming the prophets had foretold. It is no wonder therefore that John's announcement that the kingdom of God was at hand created such widespread interest. "And as the people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply he were the Christ." (Luke 3' 15.) Even the authorities in Jerusalem took notice of John's preaching, and sent a committee to him to inquire if he were the Christ. (John 1:19-27.) According to the prophecy of Isaiah, "John came, who baptized in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the country of Judaea, and all they of Jerusalem; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins." (Mark 1:2-5.)

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### John Baptizes Jesus (Verses 9-11)

"And it came to pass in those days"—that is, while John was preaching in the wilderness and baptizing in the river Jordan—"that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee." From early childhood Jesus had lived in Nazareth; by trade he was a carpenter. (Mark 6:3.) His leaving Nazareth and coming to John to be baptized was the beginning of his public life, or mission. "And was baptized of John in the Jordan." In the American Standard Version the marginal reading says, "Greek, into." Jesus was baptized—dipped—into the Jordan. He then came up out of the water. These statements could not have been made if Jesus had been sprinkled. Matthew

(3:13-17) gives a fuller account of the baptism of Jesus than does Mark. Great multitudes had come to be baptized of John; "and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins." (Matt. 3:5, 6.) John "preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins." It is likely that John believed that Jesus was the Son of God, but he did not have full proof of that truth till he baptized Jesus. (John 1:29-34.) He did know that Jesus was not a sinner, and therefore had no sins to confess nor to be remitted in baptism. Hence he said to Jesus, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." One does not fulfill all righteousness in the act of baptism, but he could not fulfill all righteousness if he failed to be baptized. In what Jesus said and did he emphasized the importance of obedience to every command. Coming up out of the water, "he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him: and a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." Was there ever another scene like this? John the Baptist—and none born of women was greater than he—was the administrator of that baptism, Jesus the Christ was the subject baptized, the Holy Spirit came down visibly upon Jesus, and the Father spoke his approval—what a scene! And yet today we have men in pulpits who dare to belittle baptism.

### **Jesus Tempted of Satan (Verses 12, 13)**

Read Matthew's and Luke's records of the temptations of Jesus. It seems from what Mark and Luke say that Jesus was being tempted during the forty days, though we are not told the nature of these forty days' temptations; but they kept Jesus under such an emotional state that no sense of hunger developed. It seems that Jesus ceased to be tempted for a space of time, and became hungry. This was a trick of the devil, and gave him an opportunity to strike at the weakest point; for nothing else is so urgent as a sense of hunger. The devil presented two temptations with a sneering if—"if thou art the Son of God." By making bread he could satisfy his hunger, and also prove to the devil that he was the Son of God; but Jesus did not desire to prove anything to the devil, nor to follow any of his suggestions. In every temptation he silenced the devil with the scriptures.

### **Jesus Preaches in Galilee (Verses 14, 15)**

Mark passes over much that occurred between the baptism of Jesus and his preaching in Galilee. In fact, he mentions only the baptism of Jesus in this period. It seems that all the events mentioned by John from the nineteenth verse of the first chapter to the close of verse 42 of the fourth chapter occurred during this period; that is, before Jesus began his Galilean ministry. After the temptation of Jesus he returned to John's place of baptizing where John pointed him out as the Lamb of God that taketh away sin; here also he gathered five followers, and returned to Galilee. There he attended with his disciples a wedding in Cana of Galilee, where he turned water to wine. He then attended the passover feast in Jerusalem, and had his celebrated conversation with Nicodemus. In the country of Judaea he taught and baptized with such great results as to excite the envy of the Pharisees. About this time it

seems that John was cast into prison. Jesus then started back through Samaria to Galilee. On this journey he had the conversation with the woman at Jacob's well, and also led many of the Samaritans to believe on him. He was rejected at Nazareth, and went down to Capernaum.

The main theme of John's preaching had been, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "Now after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel." The connection shows that the gospel of God which Jesus preached was the good news that the kingdom of God was at hand—its establishment was near. That was not man's opinion, but God's statement of a truth. To prepare for that kingdom many believers repented and were baptized. To say that God did not give the kingdom to these obedient believers is to accuse God of dealing falsely with them. Jesus made two emphatic declarations; namely, "the time is fulfilled," "the kingdom of God is at hand." To say that this kingdom is yet future is to say that both statements of Jesus were, and are, false. The command, "Repent ye, and believe in the gospel," has been hard for some to understand. Jesus was speaking to Jews who believed in God, but they had sinned against God—they had violated his law, the law of Moses. They were called on to repent of these sins, and to believe in—accept—this gospel of the kingdom. It is a perversion of the scripture to try to make it teach that a sinner must repent before he has any faith in God or Christ. No man can repent of sins unless he recognizes himself as a sinner, and he cannot recognize himself as a sinner against God unless he believes in God.

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

At the time of our lesson the land of Palestine had three principal divisions, or territories—Judaea, Samaria, and Galilee. Then there was Lower Galilee and Upper Galilee. Lower Galilee bordered on Samaria, and extended from the Mediterranean Sea to the Sea of Galilee. Jesus did more preaching in this section of Galilee than in any other section of Palestine. Jesus spent much time on the-Sea of Galilee and along its shores. He was not engaged in an aimless walk along its shores when he came upon Peter, Andrew, James, and John working at their fishing business. Fishing was not sport' with these men—it 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. To do what they did required great energy; it also required a considerable but-lay of money to equip themselves with nets and with boats of sufficient size to weather the storms which so suddenly, and without warning, swooped down on the Sea of Galilee.

To Peter, James, Andrew, and John Jesus said, "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." This refers to their future work of preaching the gospel and converting men. Once when Peter was amazed at the abundance of the fish caught in the net, Jesus said, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." The Greek word here translated "catch," means "take alive," as we learn from the marginal reading. When Jesus called these men/they did not dillydally about it—"And straightway they left their nets, and followed him." They did not so promptly; follow one of whom they

knew nothing; Jesus was not a stranger to them, for they had already been much with him. This we learn from the first four chapters of John. They evidently had returned temporarily to their business to make expense money. Jesus would now have them to forsake all, and be with him in all his travel-s, so that he might prepare them for the great work he had in view for them. But what of their nets and boats? Certainly he who had the scraps gathered up after feeding the thousands, so that nothing should be lost, would not have these men to abandon their valuable property to ruin. They left their nets and boats with Zebedee and the hired servants. As Peter, Andrew, James, and John owned their share of the equipment, it is very probable that some of the profits of the business went to the support of Jesus and his company of followers. Their having hired servants shows that they were carrying on a considerable and profitable business.

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

"And they go into Capernaum." The exact location of Capernaum is not now definitely known, but it was near the north shores of the Sea of Galilee. After Jesus was rejected at Nazareth, he dwelt in Capernaum—"and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali." (Matt. 4:13.) When Jesus came to Capernaum he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath and taught. It seems that synagogues originated while the Jews were in Babylonian captivity. They could not go to Jerusalem to worship, and they were badly scattered through the province of Babylon. Their only means of encouraging one another and of keeping a religious sentiment alive was for the Jews in a community to meet for the purpose of teaching and exhorting one another. The word "synagogue" means "an assembly," and was originally applied to these local assemblies. These meetings were kept up after the Jews returned to their own land. They built houses for these meetings, and then the word synagogue came to be applied also to these houses. It is used both ways in the New Testament, though most often applied to the house. In the following passages and others the word applies to the assembly, and not to the house: Luke 12:11; 21:12; Acts 9:2; 13:43. The rulers of the synagogues exercised disciplinary powers over the members. (John 9:22, 34, 35.) Jesus often taught in these synagogues. They had regular meetings on the Sabbath. It seems from what is said in Luke 7:1-5, that the Roman centurion at Capernaum built the Capernaum synagogue. Some of the Roman officials stationed among the Jews came greatly under the influence of the Jews' religion, as did this centurion and Cornelius.

The teaching of Jesus was not such as the people had been accustomed to hear. No teacher was supposed to teach anything on his own authority. He might teach the law of Moses and the traditions of the elders, but no more. Jesus astonished them; "for he taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes." When Jesus preached the sermon on the mount, "the multitudes were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes." Boldly, and on his own authority, he presented his teaching. He gave heed to the law, but paid no attention to the

tradition of the elders. The people did not know what to think of such teaching.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

If it could be proved, which cannot be done, that baptism can be performed by either immersion, sprinkling, or pouring, no one will argue that Jesus submitted to all three of these acts; to which did he submit? If you really want to follow him, you will want your baptism to be like his. And if you will consider the circumstances connected with his baptism, you will not be satisfied with sprinkling or pouring.

Let no one think that in the temptations of Jesus he was in the least degree inclined to follow the devil's suggestions or offer. No evil desires were stirred up in the heart of Jesus. Evil thoughts, evil desires, and evil impulses are sinful; and Jesus lived without sin. The devil's temptations had no effect on our Lord.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The baptism of Jesus.  
The temptations of Jesus.  
When the kingdom came.  
The kind of preachers needed.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
Discuss the condition of the Jews at the time of John's ministry and of the personal ministry of Jesus.

#### Verses 9-11

Discuss John's ministry.  
Discuss the baptism of Jesus.

#### Verses 12, 13

Give all the facts recorded concerning the temptations of Jesus.

#### Verses 14, 15

Trace as far as possible the activities of Jesus between his baptism and the beginning of his ministry in Galilee.  
Give the main theme of John's preaching.  
Discuss verse 15.

#### Verses 16-20

Give the territorial divisions of the land of Palestine at the time of our lesson.  
Discuss the partnership and equipment of the fishermen of our lesson.  
Whom did Jesus call, and what did he say to them?  
What evidence that they did not blindly follow a stranger?  
What disposition did they make of their property?  
What shows that they were carrying on a considerable and profitable business?

#### Verses 21, 22

Where was Capernaum?  
Discuss the uses of the word "synagogue."  
What uses were made of synagogues?  
How did the teaching of Jesus impress the people?  
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson II—January 9, 1944

### JESUS BUSY WITH HIS MINISTRY OF LOVE

Mark 1:32-45

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

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

34 And he healed many that were sick with divers diseases, and cast out many demons; and he suffered not the demons to speak, because they knew him.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." (John 9: 4.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Isa. 42: 1-7.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

January 3.	M	Ministry in the Synagogue (Mark 1: 23-28)
January 4.	T	Ministry in the Home (Mark 1: 29-34)
January 5.	W	Ministry of Prayer (Mark 1: 35-38)
January 6.	T	Ministry of Preaching (Mark 1: 39-45)
January 7.	F	Ministry by Evangelism (Mark 2: 1-7)
January 8.	S	Ministry by Enlistment (Mark 2: 8-14)
January 9.	S	Ministry of the Messiah (Isa. 61: 1-6)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—A.D. 28, the next year after the baptism of Jesus.

*Place.*—Capernaum, and "throughout all Galilee."

*Persons.*—Jesus, Peter, other disciples, and the people of Galilee.

*Lesson Links.*—Jesus did not regard human sufferings as "delusions of the mortal mind." Sickness, blindness, lameness—all forms of human sufferings—were real to Jesus, and stirred up compassion in his heart; lepers were cleansed, sick people were made well, the blind were made to see, the maimed and the crippled were made whole. But the removal of physical defects and ailments was not the main work which Jesus came to do. He came to seek and save the lost—to save men from sin, and to make them whole spiritually. The cures he performed were means to that end. They showed the benevolence of his aims and purposes toward the human family, and thereby to create in men a desire to do good to others. They also served to gain for him a hearing; but above all things else they proved that he was what he claimed to be. They were signs that God was with him, and approved him. Nicodemus had the correct idea of the miracles Jesus performed: "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.)

Our last lesson closed with the statement that Jesus taught in the synagogue at Capernaum on a Sabbath day, and that the people were astonished at his teaching. Then during the same service he cast an unclean spirit out of a man. After leaving the synagogue

he and others went into Simon Peter's house, and healed Simon's wife's mother of a great fever. Both of these miracles of healing were performed on the Sabbath day.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

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

"And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were sick, and them that were possessed with demons." The Sabbath had ended; for with the Jews the day ended at sundown, and a new day began. The law of Moses did not forbid acts of mercy on the Sabbath; but the tradition of the elders, which the Jews respected above the written law, forbade the practice of healing on the Sabbath. Jesus paid no attention to their tradition, and so had performed two miracles of mercy that Sabbath day. Yet here were many sufferers in easy reach of relief, but must continue to suffer until the Sabbath ended, though all of them would be careful to relieve the thirst and hunger of their stock on that day. Their refusal to bring sick to be healed on the Sabbath shows what a hold the traditions of the elders had even on the Galileans. There is something wrong with a religion that hinders acts of mercy; there is something wrong with it when custom and tradition has a greater hold on man than the word of God. Every Christian should see to it that custom and tradition is not the voice of God to him. When the Sabbath ended these people came in crowds, bringing their sick and afflicted to be healed, so that Jesus had no time that evening for rest and the enjoyment of the hospitality of that home. He was busy healing the sick and casting out demons. The demons knew him, but he suffered them not to speak. Jesus wanted no testimony of demons; he did not want it to seem that there was anything in common between them and him.

#### **Jesus Prayed (Verse 35)**

"And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed." In New Testament language "a desert place" was not an arid, barren waste, but was a lonely place, a tract of land suited for pasturage, a place not in cultivation. There was no district in Galilee, nor in any other part of Palestine, that was at all like what we now call a desert. On account of the throngs that pressed upon him the evening before and his early rising, Jesus had but a short rest that night. The record shows that Jesus spent much time in prayer. Not many of us are so much given to prayer. Why is this? It is likely that our negligence is due to the fact that we do not feel our need, or else we do not have confidence in God's ability or willingness to answer our prayers. But we are always in need of God's favors and blessings. Jesus knew that his Father was both willing and able to answer prayer. The right condition and attitude of heart make prayer as natural as breathing. Any earthly father will do for his children the best he can. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" (Matt. 7:11.) Too many people have hedged God in with a lot of theories about God's inability to answer prayers without working



miracles; to all such speculators God means little more than a heathen's god.

### **Jesus Preaches and Casts Out Demons (Verses 36-39)**

It appears that Peter and the other disciples had some idea as to where Jesus had gone, for they followed him and found him. Interest had run high in Capernaum, but the people were mainly interested in having their physical ailments healed. Crowds had begun to gather about the house before Peter and the others left, so much so that they reported to Jesus, "All are seeking thee." They evidently thought Jesus would immediately return to this waiting multitude; but Jesus had demonstrated his power in Capernaum, and had preached to the people of that city. Other places must be visited. "And he saith unto them, Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth." He had not come to spend all of his time in one place. He would let the people of Capernaum meditate for a season on his teaching and miracles. At the time it seems that they were too much excited over having their sick people healed to give much thought to his teaching. Besides, he must teach and demonstrate his powers in other towns and cities. "And he went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out demons." It seems that this was his first circuit through the towns of Galilee.

The demons were sometimes called evil spirits, and sometimes they were called unclean spirits. It is said that the Greeks thought the spirits of their dead heroes acted as messengers between their gods and men. These they called demons, and worshiped them. The Jews had a different theory. With them demons were evil spirits in people—the spirits of wicked dead people, which took up their abode in people. We can be certain of one thing about these demons, namely, that people were then sometimes possessed of them—beyond that we know little about them.

### **Jesus Heals a Leper (Verses 40-42)**

Demoniacs and lepers seem to have been numerous in Galilee. Jesus had been casting out demons; now a leper comes to him. His coming shows that he had some hope of being healed. It seems that he had full confidence in the power of Jesus to heal him of his leprosy. He knew that Jesus was both able and willing to heal all ordinary ailments; but he had been so long an outcast, shunned by all, that he was not certain that Jesus would have anything to do with him. Hence his peculiar way of making his plea: "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Here was faith in the power of Jesus, mixed with doubt as to the willingness of Jesus—"If thou wilt." This plea was pathetic in its humility, and also in its tinge of doubt. He stood before one who had the power to heal him, and he knew it; but he could not be sure that Jesus would deign to notice one who had been so long an outcast. Jesus was moved with compassion at his pitiful condition. It must have astonished this poor man beyond measure when Jesus touched him. And he had never before heard words that brought so much comfort and happiness as the simple statement of Jesus: "I will; be thou made clean." It was not necessary for Jesus to touch the man in order to heal him; but a friendly touch would mean much to a man whom all people shunned.

It would help him to get over the feeling of being unfit to be touched; it would help to restore confidence in his fitness to again mingle with others.

If a person, after undergoing the prescribed tests, was pronounced a leper, the law said concerning him, "And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and the hair of his head shall go loose, and he shall cover his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean . . . he shall dwell alone." (Lev. 13:45, 46.) They were not to come into the company of other people. If they saw anyone approaching, they were to cry, "Unclean, unclean." How thrilled therefore this poor wretch must have been when, instead of shunning him, Jesus actually bestowed upon him a friendly touch. He was healed of his leprosy.

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

"See thou say nothing to any man." Perhaps this prohibition was given so as to keep the excitement from running too high. People do not weigh evidence nor think seriously when they are much excited. People must be interested in a matter to do any worthwhile thinking; but too much excitement, too much emotion, leads to fanaticism. The miracles Jesus wrought in Capernaum had created much excitement, and so Jesus moved on to other towns. But now Jesus had done the impossible—he had restored a leper to health. If this were blazed abroad, excitement would run high in that section. Jesus would have people to think soberly on what he was doing and teaching. But Jesus would have the man to observe the requirements of the law. "Go show thyself to the priest." In the days of Moses there were different kinds of skin diseases called leprosy. (See Lev. 13.) Two kinds rendered a person unclean; from one of these kinds a person might recover. How he might then be legally cleansed is described in Lev. 14:1-32. When a man thought he had recovered from leprosy, he had then to show himself to the priest. If the priest, on careful examination, found no evidence of leprosy, there were then certain ceremonies for the man to go through for his legal cleansing. The various things required to be done were for the legal cleansing of the one who had recovered from his leprosy. The cure, the real cleansing and the legal cleansing were two different matters; and the process of legal cleansing was a great benefit to the victim—he was sure of his regained health when the priest pronounced him clean, and the people would not now be afraid to associate with him. This man whom Jesus healed must be obedient to the law of Moses; and that obedience would enable him to mingle freely with the people again. Hence Jesus said to him, "Go show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing the things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them."

### **The Leper Publishes His Cure (Verse 45)**

The man was so full of joy at the good fortune that had come to him that it would have required more self-control than he had to keep from telling what a great thing Jesus had done for him, even though his benefactor had charged him to say nothing about it. Such a miracle of healing was something new in that section; it created so much excitement that the crowds of people gathered

about him to such an extent that he could not openly enter into any city; there would be no gathering place in any of the towns for the people to assemble. He therefore for a time remained in desert places; that is, he remained out in the open country. Here the crowds could gather about him; the people went out to him. "And they came to him from every quarter." His fame had spread abroad, and this was done by those whom he had healed, and by those who had seen his miracles of healing.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Sickness and death come to men as a result of sin. Human ailments are real; death is more than a dream—it is an awful reality; sin is not a mere "delusion of the mortal mind," but a deadly reality. In view of what we experience and see, it is folly to think otherwise. Jesus recognized the fact of sickness and death. "And he came forth, and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick." (Matt. 14:14.) He wept at the grave of Lazarus. (John 11:35.) On many occasions Jesus had compassion on people because of their sorrowing and suffering. Compassion for the suffering and the sorrowing is one of the noblest traits of human character; and it is a sad thing to see anyone adopt a religion that robs him of all compassion and sympathy, and replaces these admirable traits with a feeling of disgust at the sufferer for imagining himself to be suffering from sickness and pain! The sickness and suffering of people filled Jesus with compassion, and his religion fills his followers with sympathy and compassion for people who are in distress from any cause.

If there is no sin, then Jesus died for naught. If there is no real sickness, no real bodily ailments nor injuries, then Jesus performed no real miracles; yet the Bible asserts in the most positive terms that Jesus healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, gave sight to the blind, made the maimed whole, and raised the dead. The man who does not believe that Jesus did these things does not believe the Bible: he does not believe what Jesus himself said. Such a man cannot therefore be a Christian. To deny the reality of sickness and bodily ailments is to deny the discoveries of science relative to diseases and their causes. That which contradicts science is not science. Our own senses, our own consciousness, our experience and observation, all teach us the reality of bodily ailments.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

- The reality of sin.
- The reality of sickness and death.
- The reality of the death and the resurrection of Jesus.
- The reality of the miracles performed by Jesus.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
What moved Jesus to compassion?  
What was the main object of his coming?  
Discuss the purposes of his miracles.

#### Verses 32-34

What two miracles did Jesus perform at Capernaum on the Sabbath?  
What occurred after sunset, and why not earlier in the day?  
What was the tradition of the elders, and what was the attitude of Jesus?

**Verse 35**

Discuss verse 35.  
What is necessary to sincere prayer?

**Verses 36-39**

Who followed and found Jesus, and what did they report?  
What reply did Jesus make?  
Discuss demons.

**Verses 40-42**

Tell about the leper, and what seems to have been his point of doubt.

What did Jesus say to him?  
What was required of a leper?

**Verses 43, 44**

Why prohibit the leper from announcing his cure?  
Why command him to go to the priest and make certain offerings?

**Verse 45**

Discuss verse 45  
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson III—January 16, 1944  
**JESUS ANSWERS HIS CRITICS**  
Mark 2:23 to 3:6

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

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

25 And he said unto them, Did ye never read what David did, when he hhd 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.*—"Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute .you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." (Matt. 5:11.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Psalm 37:1-9.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

January 10.	M	The Question About Feasting (Mark 2:15-17)
January 11.	T	The Question About Fasting (Mark 2:18-22)
January 12.	W	The Question About the Sabbath (Mark 2:23-28)
January 13.	T	Healing on the Sabbath (Mark 3:1-6)
January 14.	F	Recipients of Jesus' Mercy (Mark 3:7-12)
January 15.	S	Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit (Mark 3:22-30)
January 16.	S	Doing the Will of God (Mark 3:31-35)

**LESSON SETTINGS**

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

*Places.*—Jesus and his disciples were on their way from Jerusalem to Galilee, or had already reached Galilee, when they plucked the

ears of corn as they passed through a field. The synagogue of our lesson was evidently the synagogue in Capernaum.

*Persons.*—Jesus, his disciples, the Pharisees, and the man with a withered hand. The Pharisees were the most influential sect of the Jews. They were strict in observing the forms of the law, and revered the tradition of the elders even above the written law. They were exacting in their teaching, but loose in their manner of living. "They say, and do not." (Matt. 23:3.) To see how Jesus denounced these critical hypocrites read Matt. 23.

*Lesson Links.*—"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." "Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest." (Ex. 20:8; 23:12.) This Sabbath law was given to the Hebrews, and to no one else. To them Jehovah said, "Verily ye shall keep my sabbaths: for it is a sign between me and you through: out your generations; . . . it is holy unto you: . . . wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath . . . it is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever." (Ex. 31:12-17.) The children of Israel were commanded to keep the Sabbath; it was holy to them, and to no one else. If the whole world had been commanded to keep the Sabbath, it could not in any sense have been a sign between Jehovah and the children of Israel. That which is common to everybody cannot be a sign between two persons or parties. Again, "And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm: therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day." (Deut. 5:15.) The reason here given for the Sabbath command could apply only to the children of Israel. Jehovah brought no other nation of people out of bondage in the land of Egypt, and therefore commanded no other people to keep the Sabbath. Not even the Jews are now required to keep the Sabbath, for the law ended at the cross. (Rom. 7:1-7; Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 2:13-15; Heb. 8.) "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day." (Col. 2:16.)

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### The Pharisees Question Jesus (Verses 23, 24)

"And it came to pass, that he was going on the sabbath day through the grainfields; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears." Luke says, "His disciples plucked the ears, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands." (Luke 6:1.) As there were no fences along the paths passing through the fields, it was an easy matter for the disciples, "as they went, to pluck the ears." The Pharisees were becoming more intense in their opposition to Jesus, and they were watching for grounds for objections. They could not question the right of the disciples to eat a few handfuls of grain as they passed through the fields of grain, for the law plainly said, "When thou comest into thy neighbor's standing grain, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thy hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbor's standing grain." (Deut. 23:25.) The Pharisees objected to their doing it on the Sabbath, It is true that the law prohibited all work on the Sabbath, but no sane view of matters could have classed what the disciples were doing as work. Their actions were no more a violation of the Sabbath law than would

have been their motions in eating at home; but through the centuries the Jewish leaders had added certain refinements and limitations to the law, which they called the tradition of the elders. As the law prohibited work on the Sabbath, and this, of course, prohibited reaping and threshing on the Sabbath. The tradition of the elders made the plucking of ears a sort of reaping, and the rubbing the grain out a sort of threshing. Hence, the Pharisees' question: "Why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?" The tradition of the elders was sacred law to the Pharisees; that was the law the disciples had disregarded. Jesus himself kept the Sabbath according to the law, but he did not respect the requirements the Jews had added to that law. The Sabbath law was never intended to cause suffering to man or beast, but to work good to both man and beast.

### **Jesus Replies to the Pharisees (Verses 25-28)**

"And he said unto them, Did ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was hungry, he, and they that were with him?" There is in this question a severe rebuke to these interpreters and guardians of the law for their ignorance of its real use and application. David and his men needed food, and they ate the showbread, "which it is not lawful to eat save for the priests." The imperative need overrode the law respecting the showbread. (For an account of this incident read 1 Sam. 21:1-6.) No sin was charged against David and his men for what they did; this the Pharisees surely knew. Did not the disciples have the same need that David and his men had? David and his men were hungry; so were the disciples. Why, then, condemn the disciples and excuse David? Besides, the disciples were not really violating the law of the Sabbath; but Jesus did not raise that point he answered his critics as if the disciples had really violated the Sabbath law, as the Pharisees charged. "And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." Man needed one day in seven for rest and meditation; to meet that need the Sabbath was given, but the Sabbath law was never intended to be enforced to the injury of man. That is true, and has always been true, of all of God's laws.

Let us not conclude that the Sabbath day was changed from the seventh day to the first day of the week. Sunday is not the Sabbath; it is the Lord's day, yet there is a likeness between the two. No work was to be done on the Sabbath. The first day of the week is the Lord's day, not ours. If it is used in a manner true to its name, selfish pleasure and gainful business will be laid aside on that day. The words in the Greek really mean, "a day devoted to the Lord," just as the Lord's Supper means "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; both are the Lord's, not ours.

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

"And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there who had his hand withered." This day was apparently the Sabbath of the first part of our lesson. The scribes and Pharisees were present, seeking to find grounds for taking legal action against Jesus. The grainfields incident gave them no grounds for action

against Jesus; for it was the disciples, not he, that plucked the ears and rubbed out the grains with their hands. The defense Jesus made of his disciples was a reflection on them, and that left them in a worse humor. Had they seen to it that the man with a withered hand would be present in the synagogue, and in a conspicuous place? They expected Jesus to relieve suffering wherever he found it. They would take advantage of his benevolent spirit to get him to do what they considered an unlawful thing. In such a scheme they rated themselves very low and Jesus very high. They must have feared that Jesus would not see the man with the withered hand; so, according to Matthew, they asked Jesus, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? that they might accuse him." (Matt. 12:10.) But their scheme failed. That every one might see plainly what was done, Jesus said to the man, "Stand forth." Then Jesus presented to the scribes and Pharisees a searching question: "Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to kill?" These questions must have startled these spies; for they had come to do Jesus harm, to find him guilty of something for which they could kill him. Things were looking bad for them; they had not expected to be caught in such a trap. If Jesus healed the man, he would be doing good, and saving a life to usefulness. Which was right what they expected Jesus to do, or what they aimed to do to Jesus? They could not answer either way without condemning themselves. If they said it was right to do good on the Sabbath, they would clear Jesus of their expected charge; if they said it was wrong for him to do good on the Sabbath and right for them to do harm, they would make out a bad case against themselves. They held their peace. Their silence angered Jesus. For all they cared, the man might go on in his affliction; they wanted only an opportunity to accuse Jesus of breaking the Sabbath law. Their perversity both angered and grieved Jesus. After gazing at them for a time, he turned from them as unworthy of any further attention. To be thus ignored would sting their pride.

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

"He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand." The man's faith prompted him to do as Jesus commanded; and, in so doing, he was healed. That was a good deed done on the Sabbath day, but who did it? If healing any human affliction on the Sabbath had been a violation of the Sabbath law, as the Pharisees claimed, could they prove that Jesus healed the man? Could they find grounds for charging him with breaking the Sabbath law? He did not touch the man; neither did he say anything about healing him. There was certainly no law against telling a man to stretch forth his hand, and so far as the Pharisees could tell, that was all Jesus did. So far as they knew, a spirit direct from heaven might have healed him. It was a case of their own careful setting, for the purpose of finding Jesus guilty of healing a man on the Sabbath; but Jesus had so managed the whole affair that they knew they had no case against him. They knew also that they had again failed to entrap Jesus, and that their failure left them in a bad light before the people. This further enraged them. Luke says, "They were filled with madness" —so enraged that they were put out of their senses. Being so full of egotism, they lost control of their senses when they found themselves caught in their own trap.

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

Because the scribes and Pharisees failed to find Jesus guilty of violating the law, they rashly decided to violate the law in taking the life of Jesus; their hatred of Jesus was greater than their respect for the law and their traditions. There was no love between the Pharisees and Herodians, but continuous antagonism. The Herodians were partisans of the Herods, and favored Roman rule. The Pharisees were bitter against what the Herodians favored, excepting this one thing, namely, they united in their opposition to Jesus. A common hatred is a strange ground for any united action, and cannot be enduring. Such unions are formed only to meet some emergency, or some supposed emergency; but such unions are found even today among both religionists and politicians. It does not seem that such unions could often be formed for any good purpose. It has not been an unusual thing for such unions to be formed in towns and communities to hinder the preaching of the plain gospel of Christ, as many gospel preachers know from experience.

#### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

The Pharisees claimed that Moses delivered many precepts and definitions that were never committed to writing, but had been handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation, and were included in what they called the tradition of the elders. In the days of the earthly ministry of Christ these precepts and refinements had not been reduced to writing. The Pharisees were so wedded to the tradition of the elders that Jesus said to them, "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.) Jesus regarded this tradition as the doctrines of men. Adherence to the doctrines of men makes worship vain.

The Pharisees allowed no one to practice the art of healing on the Sabbath. No matter how much a person was suffering from sickness or wounds on the Sabbath, he could have no medical attention until the Sabbath passed. When a man's religion makes him so fanatical and cruel, he should know that there is something wrong with his religion. But some go even further these days; they allow no medical attention on any day in the week. There are extremes. One person may become so exacting on others that he is a nuisance; another may become so loose and indifferent that he is worthless. A well-balanced Christian character is as rare as it is beautiful.

#### **TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION**

The law of the Sabbath, what it required.  
To whom was the Sabbath given?  
Is the Sabbath still to be observed?  
A discussion of the Lord's day.

#### **QUESTIONS**

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

Give a discussion of the Sabbath day.

#### **Lesson Settings**

Give time, places, and persons.  
Tell about the Pharisees.

#### **Verses 23, 24**

What complaint did the Pharisees make to Jesus about his disciples?



What did the law allow a man to do to his neighbor's grain?  
What were the disciples violating?

**Verses 25-28**

Discuss the reply Jesus made to the Pharisees.  
What likeness is there between the Sabbath day and the Lord's day?  
What is the meaning of the terms, Lord's day and Lord's Supper?

**Mark 3:1-4**

What interest did the Pharisees have in what Jesus did?  
What interest did they have in the man with a withered hand?  
What question did they ask Jesus, and why?  
What answer did Jesus make?  
Why would they not answer Jesus?  
How did their silence affect Jesus?

**Verse 5**

What did Jesus say to the man with a withered hand?  
What resulted from his obedience?  
Why could they not prove anything against Jesus?  
What effect did the incident have on the Pharisees?

**Verse 6**

Who were the Herodians?  
Why were they and the Pharisees not friendly?  
What was the basis of their uniting against Jesus?  
What about hatred as a bond of union?  
Can you give some present-day unions on such a basis?  
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IV—January 23, 1944

**JESUS TEACHES IN PARABLES**

Mark 4:1-9, 26-32

1 And again he began to teach by the sea side. And there is gathered unto him a very great multitude, so that he entered into a boat, and sat in the sea; and all the multitude were by the sea on the land.

2 And he taught them many things in parables, and said unto them in his teaching,

3 Hearken: Behold, the sower went forth to sow:

4 And it came to pass, as he sowed, some seed fell by the way side, and the birds came and devoured it.

5 And other fell on the rocky ground, where it had not much earth; and straightway it sprang up, because it had no deepness of earth:

6 And when the sun was risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

7 And other fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

8 And others fell into the good ground, and yielded fruit, growing up and increasing; and brought forth, thirtyfold, and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold.

9 And he said, Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

26 And he said, So is the kingdom 'of God, as if a man should cast seed upon the earth;

27 And should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, he knoweth not how.

28 The earth beareth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear.

29 But when the fruit is ripe, straightway he putteth forth the sickle, because the harvest is come.

30 And he said, How shall we liken the kingdom of God? or in what parable shall we set it forth?

31 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown upon the earth, though it be less than all the seeds that are upon the earth,

32 Yet when it is sown, groweth up, and becometh greater than all the herbs, and putteth out great branches; so that the birds of the heaven can lodge under the shadow thereof.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"If any man hath ears to hear, let him hear." (Mark 4:23.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Deut. 8:1-10.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—*

January 17.	M	The Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1-9)
January 18.	T	The Purpose of the Parables (Mark 4:10-13)
January 19.	W	The Interpretation of the Parable (Mark 4:14-20)
January 20.	T	The Candlestick and the Seed (Mark 4:21-29)
January 21.	F	The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Mark 4:30-34)
January 22.	S	Growth in Grace and Knowledge (2 Pet. 3:14-13)
January 23.	S	A Prayer for Understanding (Psalm 119:33-40)

**LESSON SETTINGS**

*Time.*—Probably the early part of A.D. 29.

*Place.*—The Sea of Galilee; Jesus sat in a boat, "and all the multitude stood on the beach."

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

*Lesson Links.*—A parable is a figure of speech, a sort of extended simile. It is a placing of things side by side for the purpose of comparison. Things with which people were familiar were used to illustrate things with which they were not familiar. Likenesses were made to appear. Material things were used to illustrate spiritual things; worldly things were used to illustrate heavenly things. No parable was based on unknown things; no one would seriously attempt to use unknown things as illustrations. To teach by parables is to approach the unknown through the known. Some sayings of Jesus, called parables by some are not parables; but on one occasion he made a speech made up entirely of parables—on that occasion "without a parable spake he nothing unto them." (Matt. 13:34.) Matthew gives a fuller report of this speech of parables than either Mark or Luke. In preparing this lesson the student should read Matt. 13:1-50 and Luke 8:4-18. The disciples did not know why he was speaking in parables on this occasion; so they asked, "Why speakest thou unto them in parables?" To the disciples it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom—they were willing learners, and he would teach them in plain words. The Pharisees had become such bitter enemies of Jesus that they would accept none of his teaching. Any truth he spoke in plain words, they would pervert and turn against him; but they could do nothing with his parables. They could hear them, and yet not hear them in the sense of understanding them. Their hearts had waxed gross, their ears were dull of hearing, and they had closed their eyes, because they were determined not to give heed to anything he said. They had their minds made up; nothing about Jesus and his teaching fitted their theory as to the nature of the Messiah and his kingdom. Though these parables meant nothing to these bitter enemies, they would mean much to disciples all down the ages.

Care should be exercised in the interpretation of parables, lest we try to carry the likeness further than Jesus intended. Of course, when Jesus explains a parable, there is no room for any blunder; we must accept the points of likeness only so far as he points them out. Where he did not explain a parable, we must not make an interpretation of it that contradicts any plain passage of scripture; neither should we force a meaning into any figure of speech that will destroy the force of another figure relating to the same thing. Common Sense and a general knowledge of the teaching of the Bible will save the student from making any serious blunders in the interpretation of parables and other figures of speech. Nothing will safeguard a person who is lacking in these qualifications.

**COMMENTS ON THE LESSON****The Parable of the Sower (Verses 1-9)**

In this parable more is said about the seed and the soil than is said about the sower; emphasis is placed on the seed and soil. Jesus did not recite the facts of the parable for the purpose of giving his disciples a lesson on farming; they were acquainted with all the facts he stated. They knew there was a lesson in what he said, and they wanted him to explain. The explanation is given in verses 10-20. It will be necessary to take the explanation into consideration in studying the parable.

**The Seed.**—"The sower soweth the word." Matthew calls it "the word of the kingdom." Luke says, "The seed is the word of God." The word of God is therefore the seed of the kingdom. The germ of spiritual life is therefore in the word, otherwise it would not be real seed. Peter says of Christians, that they had "been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth . . . And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you." (1 Pet. 1:23-25.)

**The Sower.** The one who preaches or teaches the word is the sower. Primarily Jesus is the sower; but, under him, all that do anything toward spreading the word of the kingdom are sowers. Preaching the gospel to the whole creation, as commanded in the great commission, is sowing the seed of the kingdom. "Preach the word"—sow the seed.

**The Soil.**—The human heart is the soil into which the seed of the kingdom is sown. Jesus makes that very clear in his explanation of the parable. There are various conditions of human hearts, just as there are various conditions of soil. There are two main conditions of soil as set forth in this parable, the productive and the non-productive. Each of these has three grades—six in all. The Lord is not responsible for these conditions. Each human being must bear his own responsibility. To seek to make the parable teach that the soil, the human heart, cannot help the condition it is in, is to do violence to the parable; such interpretation would make the parable contradict the plain teaching of other passages of scripture.

**The Wayside Soil.**—Consider the conditions and methods of farming at the time the parable was spoken. Beaten paths ran along by the fields, or even through the fields; and in sowing all grain was broadcast by hand. Some of it would fall in the paths. These would be picked up by the birds—they would not even sprout. The explanation: "And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; and when they have heard, straightway cometh Satan, and taketh away the word which hath been sown in them." (Verse 15.) Luke's report: "And those by the way side are they that have heard; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word from their heart, that they may not believe and be saved." (Luke 8:12.) The devil knows that if he can get people to pay no attention to the word, there is no chance then for them to believe. The only thing that can produce faith is the word of God; these wayside hearers do not allow the word to make any impression on them. These wayside hearts have been so abused and hardened by allowing every sort of idea, notion, and whim to run over them, that no serious impression can be made upon them. Such people are likely to boast of having open minds—they have open minds like open roads, over which

everything is allowed to pass and on which nothing stays! No idea, not even the word of God, is allowed to take root.

**The Stony Ground.**—This is not soil mixed with small stones, but shallow soil on an underlying ledge of solid rock. That condition may be often seen in a limestone country. The sun will soon warm up such soil and cause the seed to come up quicker than deep soil; but the hot sun and dry weather will soon drive out the moisture from the soil on the rock, and the growing grain soon dies. The people represented by the seed sown on the thin soil on the rock "have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway they stumble." They accept the word with joy. They are emotional and impulsive, and cannot stand the fiery trials of persecution. The word did not take deep root in their hearts; they were not sustained by an abiding determination to hold on.

**The Thorny Ground.**—There was nothing wrong with the soil, so far as the parable states, excepting that it had not been properly cleared of thorns and weeds. These choked out the growing plant to the extent that it produced no fruit to perfection. These noxious growths are the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, the pleasures of life, and the lust of other things. Other things, as well as evil passions, may choke out what influence the word has had. The cares of life include all the problems of living, even moral and religious matters. Some people allow the cares and burdens of life—even these necessary matters—to crowd out all religious thought and activity. And sometimes people become so absorbed in the affairs of the church that they forget that God has anything to do with it! To prevent all these things we need constantly to study the word of God and to meditate on divine things.

**The Good Ground.**—The good ground yielded fruit—thirty-, sixty-, and a hundredfold. "And those are they that were sown upon the good ground; such as hear the word, and accept it, and bear fruit, thirtyfold, and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold." Luke gives this report: "And that in the good ground, these are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience." (Luke 8:15.) To understand the word means more than to know only what it takes to make one a Christian; to know this and obey it puts one where he can bear fruit. Both the stony ground and the thorny ground hearers did that, but neither bore any fruit. To know the love of God in giving his Son, to know the grace of God manifested in the death of Christ for our redemption, to know ourselves as sinners and in need of what God has done and will do for us—this is essential knowledge, as also it is to know that in humility we must bring our lives into submission to God's revealed will. The one who is fully persuaded as to what Christianity is and what it means to him, will live the Christian life and bear fruit; but now, as in Isaiah's day, so many people do not know and do not consider. (Isa. 1:3.) It is necessary that we heed our Lord's admonition: "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

### **Parable of the Growing Seed (Verses 26-29)**

The kingdom of God and a harvest are both alike in that both result from the sowing of seed. The kingdom began from the sowing of the seed of the kingdom. Followers of Christ were made then as now, by the sowing of seed; and these followers constituted the

kingdom in its beginning. The wheat and barley, then as now, were sown, and then left to grow without cultivation. The farmer knew some things about the growth of grain; but not even the scientist has discovered the germ of life in seed, nor been able to understand fully the sprouting and growing life of plants. Life is still a profound mystery; and were it not so evident the scientist would dispute its existence, for he cannot discover it. The soil is prepared, the seed is sown; and then "the earth beareth fruit of herself." Nature's processes are slow—"first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear." Anxiety does not hasten the harvest; to force the harvest before the grain is ripe is to lose it. And this should warn preachers not to excite or persuade people into being baptized before they are prepared in heart for such a move. Do not force the harvest.

### **Parable of the Mustard Seed (Verses 30-32)**

In the parable of the mustard seed the thought of seed is continued. Here the kingdom is represented as growing up from a very small seed, the least seed the farmers of that country sowed in their gardens or fields. It seems to represent the small beginning of the kingdom; no other kingdom had such a small beginning. Only experience and observation can tell us how large a plant will grow from a seed. Some of our field plants were not known at that time in Palestine. The mustard seed was the smallest seed they sowed in their gardens, and yet it grew to be the largest of garden herbs. The Jews then expected the kingdom to be ushered in with a mighty force; some yet look for the kingdom to begin in that way. The parable of the mustard seed, and also the parable of verses 26-29, contradicts such notion.

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

The parables of this lesson are drawn from plant life—from the seed and its growth to fruitage. They show a striking likeness between the natural and the spiritual. Here are some well-known truths in nature: (1) All life is the product of seed. Even skeptics recognize this truth. (2) Seed must be planted in soil adapted to its growth. (3) All seed brings forth after its kind. (4) Seed sown unmixed will produce the same in any soil that is adapted to its growth, no matter who does the sowing. It cannot partake of the nature or the color of the sower. The parables warrant us to state the following corresponding truths in the spiritual kingdom: (1) All life, all spiritual life, is the product of seed, the word of God. (2) The seed must be sown in soil adapted to its growth, namely, good and honest hearts. (3) This seed of the kingdom, this word of God, produces true to its nature. It brings forth after its kind. It would be an unheard of kind of seed if it did not. (4) The word of God sown unmixed with human doctrines and speculations will produce the same fruit the world over, no matter who does the sowing—the preaching. The word of God makes Christians; what else could the pure word of God make? Every doctrine sown by man brings forth after its kind; hence, so many differences in religion. The word of God sown unmixed with men's doctrines did not, and could not, produce all these different plants called churches. "Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up." (Matt. 15:13.) "Preach the word."

**TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION**

Teaching in parables—what is a parable?  
 The seed of the kingdom.  
 The different kinds of soil and hearts.  
 The likeness between the natural and the spiritual.  
 Discuss the other two parables of our lesson.

**QUESTIONS**

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

Discuss the thorny ground, the things that choke the growth.

Give a discussion of the good ground.

**Lesson Settings**

Give time, place, and persons.  
 What is a parable?  
 On what were parables based?  
 Why did Jesus speak in parables?  
 What care should be exercised in interpreting parables?

**Verses 26-29**

Give the facts of the parable of these verses.  
 Can you define life, can you locate it in a seed?  
 What results if the harvest is forced?  
 How does that apply to spiritual things?

**Verses 30-32**

**Verses 1-9**  
 On what is emphasis placed in the parable of the sower?  
 Give a discussion of the seed and the sower.  
 Discuss the soil—what is it?  
 Tell about the wayside hearer.  
 What does the stony ground represent?

Repeat the parable of the mustard seed.  
 What lesson does the parable teach us?  
 How does this parable contradict the expectations of the Jews and some of these later days?  
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson V—January 30, 1944  
**JESUS USES HIS POWER TO HELP**  
 Mark 4:35-41; 5:35-43

35 And on that day, when even was come, he saith unto them, Let us go over unto the other side.  
 36 And leaving the multitude, they take him with them, even as he was. in the boat. And other boats were with him.  
 37 And there ariseth a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the boat. insomuch that the boat was now filling.  
 38 And he himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion: and they awake him, and say unto him, Teacher, carest thou not that we perish?  
 39 And he awoke, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.  
 40 And he said unto them, Why are ye fearful? have ye not yet faith?  
 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?  
 35 While he yet spake, they come from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Teacher any further?  
 36 But Jesus, not heeding the word spoken, saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Fear not, only believe.  
 37 And he suffered no man to follow with him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.  
 38 And they come to the house of the ruler of the synagogue; and he beholdeth a tumult, and many weeping and wailing greatly.  
 39 And when he was entered in, he saith unto them, Why make yea tumult, and weep? the child is not dead, but sleepeth.  
 40 And they laughed him to scorn. But he, having put them all forth, taketh the father of the child and her mother and them that were with him, and goeth in where the child was.  
 41 And taking the child by the hand, he saith unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise.

42 And straightway the damsel rose up, and walked; for she was twelve years old. And they were amazed straightway with a great amazement.

43 And he charged them much that no man should know this: and he commanded that something should be given her to eat.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Why are ye fearful? have ye not yet faith?" (Mark 4:40.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Isa. 9:1-7.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

January 24.	M	Help in the Storm (Mark 4:35-41)
January 25.	T	Help Among the Tombs (Mark 5:1-10)
January 26.	W	Help for the Fearful (Mark 5:11-20)
January 27.	T	Help for the Diseased (Mark 5:21-34)
January 28.	F	Help in the House of Death (Mark 5:35-43)
January 29.	S	Help in Time of Trouble (Matt. 15:21-28)
January 30.	S	"My Help Cometh from Jehovah" (Psalm 121)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 29.

*Places.*—Sea of Galilee and Capernaum.

*Persons.*—The disciples of Jesus, Jairus, his daughter, and the people.

*Lesson Links.*—It is not so important that we be able to give an exact definition of miracle; but it is important that we know something about miracles in general, and about miracles as signs. Some miracles were signs—signs of God's presence with the one through whom or by whom they were wrought. Many miracles were not signs to anybody about anything. The New Testament Greek made a distinction between miracles and signs, and the American Standard Version follows that distinction, which the King James Version does not do. Miracles wrought in connection with the preaching of God's messengers, God's inspired men, were signs of God's presence with them—proof that God had sent them. And the people had a right to such proof. If a man went out claiming to be sent of God with a revelation to the people, it was not only their right, but their duty, to demand evidence that God had sent him with his message. What evidence could such a man give? Any impostor could claim to be sent of God. A man of sincerity might be of a highly visionary temperament and might deceive himself into thinking he was inspired. What protection can people have from all such characters? Jesus and God's inspired men proved their claims by the miracles they performed. When some of Paul's enemies tried to prove that he was not an apostle, he replied, "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty works." In this way he proved that he was what he claimed to be, a chosen apostle. In the same way Jesus proved that God had sent him. "But the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." (John 5:36.) Nicodemus had the correct idea as to the purpose of these sign miracles: "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.)

But not all miracles were signs. The creation of the heavens and the earth and all things that make up this world was done by a

series of great miracles, but these were not signs to anyone about anything. Have such miracles ceased? Will there be any more such miracles? Read the answer in what is said about the resurrection of the dead; read also what Peter says will occur when the day of the Lord comes. (2 Pet. 3:10-13.) But these great miracles will not be signs. Signs, miracles to prove that God is with someone's ministry, have ceased. Our faith healers have utterly mistaken the purpose of these sign miracles.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### Jesus Seeks Rest (Verses 35, 36)

"On that day, when even was come." It was on the day in which Jesus had delivered the speech of parables. Sitting in a boat a little way from the shore, Jesus had made his speech to a great multitude. No one, excepting a public speaker, knows how exhausting it is to make a long speech to a great crowd of people, and that in the open air. Now, at even, Jesus was tired, and desired to get away from that vast multitude for rest. He became weary the same as we. In thinking of him as the Son of God, we are likely to forget that he was also the Son of man. But he could not rest in the presence of that vast throng of people; so he said to the disciples, "Let us go over unto the other side," the other side of the Sea of Galilee. On the trip across the sea the people could not throng him. Jesus knew the need for rest, the need for a vacation. If a preacher now should suddenly tear himself away from a great meeting in which the interest was running high, what would the people think? He most likely would be severely criticized and denounced in no gentle terms. What the people said and thought when the Lord so suddenly left them is not important to us. But a weary man is not evading a responsibility, nor shirking a duty, when he spends a few days in needed rest. He is storing up energy for better work. Besides, it is not good for a man to continue long under the spotlight; he needs occasionally to get away from the applause of the multitude and the praise of friends, and take stock of himself his plans, thoughts, purposes, ideals, and ambitions. Self-analysis is essential to piety and reverence. "Take time to be holy." On the other side of the sea the country was not so densely populated, and Jesus was not so well known in that section. There was some chance that he would not be thronged by the multitudes.

Mark's language shows that he departed in the boat from which he had been speaking. "Even as he was," indicates a hurried departure. It seems that they made no special preparation for the trip. How that multitude would have pressed upon him, had he gone ashore for any purpose! "And other boats were with him." Others beside the apostles followed Jesus in his journeys. Peter said, "Of the men therefore that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of his resurrection." (Acts 1:21, 22.)

#### A Great Storm of Wind Arises (Verses 37, 38)

"The Sea of Galilee is an expansion of the Jordan, thirteen miles long, about eight miles in maximum breadth; its surface is six



hundred eighty feet below that of the Mediterranean Sea; its maximum depth is about one hundred fifty feet. In shape it is like a pear, the narrow end pointing southward. Like the Dead Sea, it is set deep among the hills, which rise on the east side to a height of about two thousand feet."—Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible. The Sea of Galilee is noted for its sudden and violent storms of wind, making it a dangerous body of water. Such a storm came down on Jesus and those with him; the waves ran so high as to begin to fill the boat. "And he himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion." Being exhausted from the labors of the day, and able at once to dismiss from his mind the day's activities, he had soon fallen into a deep sleep, from which the storm had not aroused him. It is a blessed thing, when exhausted, to be able to relax and fall at once into restful sleep. "And they awake him, and say unto him, Teacher, carest thou not that we perish?" Matthew reports them as saying, "Save, Lord; we perish." Luke says: "Master, master, we perish." Each writer reports only a part of what they said. The words Mark reports seem to have been spoken as a reproach to Jesus. They were greatly afraid.

### **Jesus Calms the Wind and the Sea (Verses 39-41)**

"And he awoke, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." Luke reports: "And he awoke, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm." The winds did not gradually subside; nor did the waves by degrees cease their violence, as waves always do after a disturbance. Both the wind and the waves ceased at once. It was therefore a double miracle, and it filled the disciples with wonder; but Jesus was not pleased with their conduct. "And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful? have ye not yet faith?" Matthew reports: "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" You have heard much about their lack of faith, or, rather; their defective faith; but have you considered the matter enough to determine wherein their faith was defective? They believed the Lord had power to save them, for they awoke him for that purpose, and then prayed, "Save, Lord." It seems plain enough that the defect in their faith is shown in the expression, "Carest thou not that we perish?" This implies, "You could save us, if you cared enough to do it?" In thus reproaching him they showed a lack of trust and confidence in him—a doubt of his interest in them and his care for them. "And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" Matthew reports, "And the men marveled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" They did not yet realize that he was God manifested in the flesh—to them he was a man, a most wonderful man.

### **Why Further Trouble the Master? (Mark 5:35, 36)**

The student should read verses 1-34. On returning from the east side of the Sea of Galilee, it seems that he landed at a point near Capernaum; a multitude were awaiting him. A ruler of the synagogue, Jairus by name, came to Jesus in great humility and distress, beseeching Jesus to come and heal his little daughter, who was at the point of death. "And he went with him." On the way he

was detained by the healing of a woman and hearing her tell him the story of her life. While he was telling the woman that her faith had made her whole, some came from the house of Jairus, "saying, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Teacher any further?" It had not occurred to them that Jesus could raise the dead, as well as heal the sick. Having heard this report, Jesus said to Jairus, "Fear not, only believe." It was a time of discouragement to this ruler; his daughter was dead; hope had fled. Jesus spoke these words to encourage his faith, and not to teach that men are saved by faith only. Jairus had done all he could in the matter; now matters were entirely in the hands of the Lord. He could now only trust and wait. If you now do all you can, and you have done that until you do all the things commanded, the only thing you can do is to trust and wait.

### **The Daughter Is Raised (Verses 37-43)**

Jesus left the multitude behind, taking with him only Peter, James, and John. When they came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, they found a noisy crowd of weeping and wailing people. That seems to have been common among the Jews. To stop all that noise Jesus would say a thing that would turn their thoughts from the dead child to himself, and he succeeded. "Why make ye a tumult, and weep? the child is not dead, but sleepeth." It was as if she were only taking a short nap from which she would soon be awakened. But their weeping stopped, and they began to deride Jesus. They thought his speech too absurd for any sensible man to utter. He sent the crowd of scoffers out of the house. He then took Peter, James, and John, and the parents of the child into the room where the child was. We gain nothing by speculating as to why, on different occasions, Jesus took only these three of his disciples with him. When he entered the room where the child lay, he took the child by the hand and spoke some Aramaic words, which Mark interprets for his Greek readers as meaning, "Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise." It was done simply and quietly. The ones who scoffed at Jesus were not permitted to see the miracle. And this too was a double miracle, Jesus not only raised her from the dead, but gave her at once her usual strength. Her sickness unto death had, of course, greatly weakened her. To give her back her usual strength was in itself a great miracle. Those who saw what occurred were greatly amazed. An amazing thing had been done. And how these men and the mother would have glorified in announcing what had been done! But Jesus "charged them much that no man should know this." And there is no proof that those about the house knew that the child had been raised. In their joy the parents did not think of the needs of their child, but Jesus did not forget. "And he commanded that something should be given her to eat." And we can well imagine how that mother then hurried to attend to the needs of her child.

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

Is our faith what it should be? Are we not often like the disciples were in that storm? It is easy for us to think of Jehovah as the mighty creator, and that all things are possible with him; but in our trials and troubles do we think of him as a Father who cares for his children?

Had it not been for her desperate condition, the woman mentioned in the verses between the two parts of our lesson might not have paid any attention to Jesus; and had it not been for the grief and anxiety of Jairus, he might have paid little, or no, attention to Jesus. Jesus was now their only hope, and they turned to him for help. Calamities and sorrows do not convert people, as some think; but they do often put a person in such a frame of mind that he is willing to give attention to God's word and to obey him. It is this obedience that makes one a Christian. It was a great thing for Jesus to restore health to that poor woman's body, and seemingly a still greater thing to restore life to the dead body of the daughter of Jairus; but it is a much greater thing to restore health to the sinsick soul and to give life to a person dead in sin. In this greatest of all works we may, and should, have a part.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Miracles that were signs, and miracles that were not signs.  
The Sea of Galilee.  
Ways in which our faith may be defective.  
The part calamities and sorrows may play in conversion.

### QUESTIONS

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

What did Jesus say to his disciples?  
Wherein was their faith defective?

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Discuss miracles in general, and miracles as signs.  
Give evidence that sign miracles have ceased.

#### Mark 5:35, 36

On returning from the east side of the Sea of Galilee, who met Jesus?  
What plea did Jairus make?  
Tell what occurred on the way to the house of Jairus.  
What word came to Jairus on the way?  
Repeat what Jesus said to him.  
Why the command, "Only believe"?

#### Verses 35, 36

Where was Jesus, and what had he just been doing?  
Why "go over unto the other side"?  
Discuss the need for rest and meditation.  
Who went with Jesus?

#### Verses 37-43

Whom did Jesus take to the house of Jairus?  
What did Jesus say to the crowd of mourners, and with what effect?  
Tell what Jesus did and said in raising the dead child to life.  
What did he demand of those present?  
What did he command with reference to the child?  
Discuss the reflections.

#### Verses 37, 38

Tell about the Sea of Galilee and its dangerous storms.  
Tell about the storm of our lesson.

#### Verses 39-41

Show that Jesus really performed a double miracle.

Lesson VI—February 6, 1944

### JESUS FEEDS THE MULTITUDES

Mark 6:35-44; 8:1-9

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

42 And they all ate, and were filled.

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

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

1 In those days, when there was again a great multitude, and they had nothing to eat, he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them,

2 I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat:

3 And if I send them away fasting to their home, they will faint on the way; and some of them are come from far.

4 And his disciples answered him, Whence shall one be able to fill these men with bread here in a desert place?

5 And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.

6 And he commandeth the multitude to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he brake, and gave to his disciples, to set before them; and they set them before the multitude.

7 And they had a few small fishes: and having blessed them, he commanded to set these also before them.

8 And they ate, and were filled: and they took up, of broken pieces that remained over, seven baskets.

9 And they were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." (John 6:35.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—John 6:27-35.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

January 31. M

February 1. T

February 2. W

February 3. T

February 4. F

February 5. S

February 6. S

Teaching in a Desert Place (Mark 6:30-34)

Feeding Five Thousand Men (Mark 6:35-44)

Walking on the Sea (Mark 6:45-52)

Feeding the Four Thousand (Mark 8:1-9)

A Miracle Meal for a Hundred Men (2 Kings 4:42-44)

Feeding a Nation Forty Years (Ex. 16:11-15)

"The Bread of Life" (John 6:32-35, 47-51)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 30 or 31.

*Places.*—A desert place on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee; apparently another place on the east side of the Sea of Galilee.

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

*Lesson Links.*—In chapter 6, verses 7-13, Mark gives an account of {he sending of the twelve on a preaching tour. They went two and two. Just before the events of the first part of our lesson, they returned from this preaching tour, and reported to Jesus "all things, whatsoever they had done, and whatsoever they had taught. And he saith unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while. For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat." (Verses 30, 31.) In telling of these events John gives this additional information: "Now the passover of the Jews was at hand." There would therefore at this time be great crowds of Jews on their way to Jerusalem. Many would be passing through Capernaum—hence, the "coming and going." They would want to see Jesus in passing. This would account, in part at

least, for their thronging Jesus to such an extent that he and his disciples had no opportunity to eat. They must get away from that crowd, if possible. From Matthew we learn that another reason also contributed to this move. Word had just come that Herod had beheaded John the Baptist. Because the people regarded John as a great prophet, a great man, they were very indignant. John's disciples came and told Jesus. "Now when Jesus heard it, he withdrew from thence in a boat, to a desert place apart." (Matt. 14:12, 13.) Jesus had become so famous that doubtless the people would expect him to do something about such a tragedy as the beheading of John. Before the word spread too much, and the people became too wrought up, he would get away from the passing throngs. "And they went away in the boat to a desert place apart. And the people saw them going, and many knew them, and they ran together there on foot from all the cities, and outwent them." (Mark 6:32, 33.) Luke tells us that they "withdrew apart to a city called Bethsaida." (Luke 9:10, 11.) This Bethsaida was evidently located at a point on the east side of the Jordan near the Sea of Galilee. The "desert place apart" was therefore near this Bethsaida. It is certain therefore that Jesus and the disciples did not land far down on the east side of the Sea of Galilee, else the people could not have arrived at the landing place so soon. Perhaps the winds were not favorable, and Jesus and the disciples made slow progress; the crowds reached the landing place before Jesus and the disciples did. "And he came forth and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, :because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things." "As sheep not having a shepherd" is a graphic description of the condition of the Jews when Jesus came to earth. Their leaders were selfish and corrupt, and cared for the people only for what they could get out of them. Instead of trying to make the burdens of life easier for the people, they laid heavy burdens on them, grievous to be borne. Read how Jesus denounced these leaders, as recorded in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew. Because the people saw that Jesus was unselfishly interested in their welfare, and manifested that interest in healing the sick and the distressed, they thronged about him and heard him gladly. They knew that he was not trying to use them for his own selfish ends. He did not look upon them with greed; "he had compassion on them." They had been so helpless under the abuse of their selfish leaders—men who had no regard for their spiritual needs, but bound upon them the worthless tradition of the elders as of more importance than the written law and the prophets. These leaders had put themselves forward as shepherds, but were merely wolves devouring the flock. This stirred up the compassion of Jesus, as did also the sick and afflicted.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### Conversation About Feeding the Multitude (Verses 35-38)

This is the one miracle that all the writers record. (See Matt. 14:13-21; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14.) It is well to study what each writer says, for neither writer gives all the details. The multitude had rushed out to this place without giving any thought to the matter of food for the day; they were so carried away with the excitement of the hour that they gave no thought to their own needs. As it drew toward the close of the day, the matter of food became of

interest. Putting together what all the writers say, the conversation between Jesus and his disciples must have been about as follows: Jesus said to Philip, "Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat?" Philip answered, "Two hundred shillings' worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little." He answered, "Give ye them to eat." The other disciples said, "Shall we go and buy two hundred shillings' worth of bread, and give them to eat?" (The way this definite amount of money was mentioned shows rather clearly that this was the amount of money Jesus and the disciples had on hand at the time, but that amount of money would not buy enough bread that each one might have a little.) Jesus said, "How many loaves have ye? go and see." After a search practical Andrew reported, "There is a lad here, who hath five barely loaves, and two fishes; but what are these among so many?" The disciples considered the matter of feeding such a multitude was therefore impossible. We are sure Jesus knew all the while how he would feed them; but the questionings and the search would show the multitude how meager was the supply, that they might thereby see the greatness of the miracle in feeding them. And it was good for the disciples to feel that they had some part in the

matter. Orderly Arrangement of the Multitude (Verses 39, 40) There had to be order and system in feeding such a multitude, else confusion would have reigned. There is order and system in what the Lord does; that is characteristic in all his works. Such a multitude would not of themselves arrange themselves in such groups as to make it convenient to distribute the food to all alike. Jesus, as host, had charge of all preparations for feeding the people. "And he commanded them that all should sit down by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties." It is said that "the Jewish dining room was arranged like the Roman: three tables forming three sides of a square, and with divans or couches following the outside line of the tables." Arranging this crowd in squares with one side of the square open, or in a V-shape, made it more convenient for the disciples in distributing the food to them. The green grass made a pleasant carpet on which to sit or to recline.

### **A Great Miracle (Verses 41-44)**

Jesus "blessed"; or, according to John, he gave "thanks." In connection with eating, and in some other uses, to bless was to give thanks for the blessing; in this case, for the food. As further illustrations, see these passages: Matt. 26:26, 27; Mark 14:22, 23; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:23, 24. The old-timer who was wont to say to his guest at the table, "Say the blessing," was not departing far from New Testament usage. In our ordinary usage today, to bless is to confer a benefit. Now, you cannot confer a benefit on an inanimate thing, And when David said, "Bless Jehovah, O my soul," as he often did, he did not mean that his soul could confer any benefit on Jehovah; he was expressing his sincere gratitude to Jehovah for Jehovah's goodness to him.

Five thousand, besides women and children ate; and were filled. John reports Jesus as saying, "Gather up the broken pieces which remain over; that nothing be lost." "And they took up broken

pieces, twelve basketfuls, and also of the fishes." There is a lesson on economy in this. No useful thing should be wasted; to waste that which can be of use is a sin. This example of Jesus should be our guide. But this question may arise: If Jesus wanted nothing lost, why did he increase the amount so far above what they could eat? Think a little. Had everything been eaten to the last scrap, even though everyone had eaten to the full, they might have wondered how everyone got enough out of so little; but when all were filled, then more was taken up than they began with, everyone could readily see that a miracle had been wrought. For a miracle to be effective it had to be performed in such way that all could see that it was a real miracle, and not a fake. There could have been no doubt as to the reality of this miracle.

### **Four Thousand Fed (Mark 8:1-9)**

Many things occurred between the incidents recorded in the two sections of our printed text. John records the following immediately after his record of the feeding of the five thousand: "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. Herod, who had beheaded John the Baptist, was a part of the Roman system of government. There was already a deep-seated spirit of rebellion in the people against the Romans. The beheading of John made them want to do something about it, and it seemed to them that Jesus would be an ideal leader to lead them in a war of liberation. To avoid any further clamor Jesus withdrew into a mountain alone. The next day, having crossed the sea, he said to those that followed him, "Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves, and were filled." Then Jesus gave an admonition which all should heed: "Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you." Jesus then delivered to them a discourse on the food they most needed, the bread of life. "I am the bread of life."

To keep up the connection the student should not fail to read the seventh chapter of Mark. After a controversy with the Pharisees about the tradition of the elders, Jesus went up into the borders of Tyre, then through Sidon and back through Decapolis. On this trip he went further north than at any other time. Soon thereafter Jesus found himself surrounded by a great multitude who had brought along nothing to eat. Their three days of fasting excited the compassion of Jesus. A return to their homes without food would be too much for some of them. "If I send them away fasting to their home, they will faint on the way; and some of them are come from afar." But the disciples did not see how that condition could be remedied. "Whence shall one be able to fill these men with bread here in a desert place?" For these disciples it would have been impossible, for there were to be had only seven loaves and a few small fishes. But all things are possible with God. At the command of Jesus the multitude seated themselves on the ground; but before passing out the food to the people, Jesus gave thanks. In this, as well as in other matters, Jesus set his disciples an example; and no disciple should fail to follow that example: On this occasion about four thousand were fed, and seven baskets were filled with what was left over. Here again more was taken up than they

began with. The people therefore could see that a great miracle had been wrought, but Mark says not one word about the effect of this great miracle on the multitude. Yet such a miracle was bound to make a great impression on all who ate and were filled.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

It has been argued that Philip could not have immersed the Ethiopian eunuch in a desert place. But to meet that contention one needs only to call attention to the fact that Jesus and his disciples went to a desert place in a boat, and that the people there sat down on the green grass. In New Testament usage a desert was merely an open space—a pasture or uninhabited place.

In both miracles of this lesson Jesus showed both his benevolence and his power. All his miracles, unless the withering of the fig tree be an exception, showed clearly his mercy and kindness to the needy and helpless; they showed that his mission was to help people. No life was impoverished or made burdensome, but many were richer in health and hope, by his gracious ministrations. And his miracles proved that he was what he claimed to be, the Son of God and the Savior of men.

Jesus said to the multitude, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." (John 6:35.) By this Jesus did not mean that those who came to him would so feed on him—this bread of life—as to become so "fed-up" that they would want no more of him. He is the bread that satisfies; the true believer hungers for nothing else. He does not hunger for the doctrines and philosophies of men, nor for the world with its riches and pleasures.

The next day after Jesus fed the five thousand, he said to the multitude who came seeking him, "Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves, and were filled." What an indictment! The real blessings which Jesus had for them, they did not want; only the loaves and the fishes interested them! They were not materialists in theory, but they were in practice. Only material things interested them—the main thing was something to eat. Are we better than they?

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Work and rest, and when rest becomes idleness.  
The Bible use of the word "desert."  
The compassion of Jesus.  
The bread of life.

### QUESTIONS

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

Why did Jesus have compassion on them?  
What sort of men were then leaders among the Jews?

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places; and persons.  
Why did Jesus invite the apostles to come aside to rest?  
Why were such crowds coming and going?  
What disturbing news had just come to them?  
Where did they go, and how?  
What is said of the multitude?

#### Verses 35-38

Who else records this miracle?  
Give the conversation, as near as you can, between Jesus and the disciples.

#### Verses 39, 40

Tell how the multitude was arranged, and why?



**Verses 41-44**

Discuss the Bible use of the word "bless" in connection with eating.

How many were fed?

Why pick up what was left over?

Why so much created?

Tell some of the things that occurred between the two parts of our lesson.

What journey did Jesus make between the two sections of our lesson?

What did Jesus say concerning the multitude that had gathered about him?

Give an account of the way they were fed.

Discuss the reflections.

**Mark 8:1-9**

Lesson VII—February 13, 1944

**JESUS ON THE MOUNTAIN AND IN THE VALLEY**

Mark 9:2-8, 17-27

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 glistening, exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

25 And when Jesus saw that a multitude came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.

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

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

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"I believe; help thou mine unbelief." (Mark 9:24.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—2 Pet. 1:12-21.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

February 7. M

February 8. T

February 9. W

February 10. T

February 11. F

Jesus on the Mountain (Mark 9:2-8)

The Impotent Disciples (Mark 9:14-19)

Jesus in the Valley (Mark 9:20-29)

The Glorified Christ (Rev. 1:12-18)

Isaiah's Vision and Service (Isa. 6:1-8)

February 12. S  
February 13. S

Moses on the Mount of God (Ex. 24:12-18)  
"Who Shall Ascend?" (Psalm 24)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—A.D. 30 or 31.

*Places.*—A high mountain and a near-by valley.

*Persons.*—Jesus, Moses, Elijah, the apostles, a father and his afflicted son, and the multitude.

*Lesson Links.*—Just before the events of our lesson Jesus went with his disciples up into the regions of Caesarea Philippi. "On the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Who do men say that I am?" For a fuller account of the conversation on the occasion of this question, read Matt. 16:13-28. The people had expressed various opinions as to who Jesus was. What they thought did not matter so much at that time; but as Jesus was training his apostles to carry on his work and reveal his will, it did matter greatly as to what they thought; so he asked them, "But who say ye that I am?" Peter, answering for all, said: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Peter confessed his faith, not a mere opinion; but he did not then realize the full force of the truth he confessed; as is clearly seen in his rebuking Jesus a few moments later for saying "that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." Had Peter fully realized that Jesus was God manifest in the flesh, he would have known that the things Jesus mentioned would certainly come to pass just as Jesus said they would. But Peter did believe the truth as to who Jesus was, though he did not know the full import of that truth. On that great truth Jesus built his church. A church of God cannot be built on any other foundation. (1 Cor. 3:11.) If Jesus be not the Christ, the Son of the living God, then there is no foundation, no excuse, for the church. (In preparing this lesson the student should read Matt. 17:1-21; Luke 9:28-43.)

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### Jesus Transfigured (Verses 2, 3)

"And after six days"—six days after the events mentioned in Chapters 8:27-38; 9:1. Luke says it was about eight days. It must be that Luke counted the day on which the conversation just mentioned occurred and also the time of the transfiguration, and that Matthew and Mark counted the intervening days. Jesus and his disciples were yet up in the regions of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus took Peter, James, and John "up into a high mountain apart by themselves." Luke tells us that they went there to pray. This high mountain was probably Mount Hermon, for it is a high mountain, rising ten thousand feet above sea level. On some bench, or tableland, of this mountain, they would find a suitable place to spend a season in prayer. As they trudged up that mountain, Peter, James, and John could not have had the least expectation of the experience that was soon to be theirs, an experience such as no other men ever had. Circumstances caused Jesus to feel the need of communing with the Father. Only a few days before this the disciples, especially Peter, had manifested antagonism to the things Jesus had said about his approaching death and resurrection, even though they had con-

fessed him to be the Messiah, the Son of God. That was disappointing and depressing. 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 experience that immediately followed would encourage him beyond words to express. The experience would also have a wholesome effect on these three fiery disciples. "And he was transfigured before them." Nothing like the change that took place in the appearance of Jesus had ever been seen before; hence there was no word in use that could give an exact idea as to what occurred. Neither the Greek word here translated transfigured, nor the English word transfigured, fully express the change that took place in the appearance of Jesus; hence the writers use other words to describe his appearance. Matthew says, "And his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light." Mark says, "And his garments became glistening, exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them." Luke says, "The fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became white and dazzling." With his face shining as the sun and his garments white and dazzling, he presented to these disciples a foreview of what he would be in his glorified state. As we have never witnessed such a scene, we cannot fully realize its effect on the three apostles. This awe-inspiring scene remained a vivid picture in Peter's mind down to old age. (2 Pet. 1:16-18.)

#### **Moses and Elijah Appear (Verse 4)**

"And there appeared unto them Elijah with Moses." Luke says they appeared in glory, evidently meaning that they appeared in a glorified state. Never had there been gathered together on earth three such great personages—Moses the lawgiver, Elijah the prophet-reformer, and Jesus the Son of God. And Peter, James, and John saw them together, and heard their conversation. It may have been that, from this conversation, they learned who these glorified visitors were. Luke gives us the topic of their conversation: "And spake of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." And these apostles, who had thought that Jesus must not die, heard Jesus calmly discussing his coming death with these glorified visitors.

#### **Peter's Proposal (Verses 5, 6)**

Peter, always ready to speak out, said, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here." It was good for Jesus and for the three apostles. Jesus had gone with the three apostles up into this mountain to pray. Even though Jesus may not have prayed for the exact experience that they were having, it was nevertheless God's way of answering his prayer. It was such a glorious experience that Peter wanted to prolong it. "Let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." And who can blame Peter for wanting to prolong such a glorious experience. Peter had in mind the building of such tabernacles, or booths, as the Jews built at the feast of tabernacles—booths made of the boughs of trees. He thought to honor Jesus equally with Moses and Elijah, not knowing that to put Jesus on an equality with Moses and Elijah was really to dishonor him. But Peter made the proposal, not knowing what to say. When a person does not know what to say, it is better not to say

anything But no tabernacles were needed; for Moses and Elijah were about to depart, and Jesus and his disciples would soon leave that place. The experience must have lifted some of the gloom and depression from the heart of Jesus, and given him strength and courage to go on with his work of ministering to the needs of humanity From Luke we learn that Peter made the proposal for three tabernacles as Moses and Elijah were parting from them.

### **"Hear Ye Him" (Verses 7, 8)**

"And there came a cloud overshadowing them." From Matthew we learn that this cloud appeared while Peter was speaking, and that it was a bright cloud. It seems that Moses and Elijah disappeared in this cloud. At that moment a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son: hear ye him." This voice was heard as Moses and Elijah were disappearing. Nothing else could have so impressed the apostles that only Jesus remained for them to hear. The disappearance of Moses and Elijah at that moment was symbolic; and the command, "Hear ye him;" was emphatic. 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.) God now speaks to us through his prophet, his own beloved Son. (Heb. 1:1, 2.) He is the head, the governing power, of the church, which is his body. (Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 1:18.) Jesus is the pre-eminent Christ—in authority he stands above all others. All power is his. (Matt. 28:18.) And he is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey him. (Heb. 5:8, 9.) "Hear ye him."

### **The Disciples Fail to Cast Out a Demon (Verses 17, 18)**

Jesus and the three apostles came down from the mount of the transfiguration on the next day. "And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a man, kneeling to him, and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is epileptic, and suffereth grievously; for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft-times into the water." (Matt. 17:14, 15.) The son was dumb, as well as epileptic. He was the father's only child. He had been suffering this affliction from childhood. A severe epileptic fit, such as this lad had, is a horrible sight. What this father said to Jesus shows that he merely thought it possible that Jesus might be able to do something for his son; but when he arrived where the disciples were, Jesus had not returned from the mountain. Though the disciples had cast out demons (Mark 6:7, 13), they failed this time in the presence of the critical scribes. It was humiliating to the disciples; and these scribes would, of course, hold them up to scorn before the multitude. It shows that even the enemies of the right may sometimes enjoy temporary triumph because of the weakness of those who are in the right.

### **Jesus Questions the Father of the Child (Verses 19-22a)**

"O faithless generation." That expression would be true of the whole multitude, but Jesus must have meant it especially as a rebuke to his disciples. And these were the men whom Jesus was training to carry on his work. He would soon leave them; would they have sufficient faith, or would it fail as on this occasion? Jesus now had to do personally what these disciples should have been able

to do. SO he commanded, "Bring him unto me." And when the son was brought, "straightway the spirit tare him grievously." For "tare" the marginal reading has "convulsed." Convulsed seems clearly to be the correct word. The child was given to having epileptic fits, or convulsions. He had a terrific convulsion just as he was brought to Jesus. That "convulsed" is the right word, not "tare," is Shown by the added words, "and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming." It was a horrible thing to experience, and even to see. Jesus asked the father, "How long time is it since this hath come unto him?" Two or three things would be accomplished by this question. It would help to get the father's mind off the failure the disciples had made; and the father's answer would show the multitude that the convulsions were not caused by some temporary ailment which would soon pass away, but that the child was suffering from a permanent affliction. All present could see that a great miracle had been performed. It was certainly no fault of this lad that he was possessed of an evil spirit, for he had been thus afflicted from a child. It cannot be proved that demon possession was the fault of the victim.

### **The Evil Spirit Cast Out (Verses 22b-27)**

The disciples had failed to cast out the demon, and the father had doubts as to the ability of Jesus to do any better. "If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." He could not have more plainly expressed doubt as to the ability of Jesus to do anything. There is a degree of sarcasm and a gentle rebuke in what Jesus said—"If thou canst!" The man did not know who or what Jesus was, else he would not have expressed any doubt as to what Jesus could do. Ignorance says many things that knowledge would be ashamed of. "All things are possible to him that believeth." This does not mean that anyone can do anything he thinks he can do, but that it was possible for Jesus to help anyone who believed. That is what the man understood Jesus to mean, as is seen in his reply: "I believe; help thou mine unbelief." At this moment the multitude came together to see what would occur. Not wanting to satisfy the curiosity of the multitude, Jesus commanded the demon to come out. The son had another terrific convulsion as the evil spirit left him, and the boy became as one dead. The majority said, "He is dead"; but Jesus raised him up, strong and well, and then the exultant scribes were put to shame.

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

Materialists claim that man has no spirit that survives the death of the body, and that there is therefore no personal existence between death and the resurrection. But the Bible tells us plainly that Moses died, and also that he appeared on the mountain and talked with Jesus. To offset this materialists put stress on the word "vision" in Matthew's report. It is true that the word from which we have vision in Matthew sometimes 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 in Matthew applies to things actually seen, not to visions in dreams, seems, from the considerations, not to admit of a doubt: (1) All writers say plainly that Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James, and John. (2) They

state as facts that Moses and Elijah were present and talked with Jesus. Materialists deny the reality of their presence, and would have us believe Jesus carried on a conversation with nonexistent persons, as if he were mentally unbalanced. (3) The apostles were not asleep—not dreaming. Luke says, "When they were fully awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him." To dispute this is to dispute 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." And so the vision was what they had actually seen. (5) Peter speaks very definitely about the reality of that mountain experience. The student should read carefully 1 Pet. 1:16-18.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Moses.

Elijah.

Does man's spirit survive the death of the body?

A study of demon possession.

### QUESTIONS

Tell where the lesson is found.

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

Give other scriptures on the authority of Jesus Christ.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.

Discuss the conversation between Jesus and his disciples near Caesarea Philippi.

#### Verses 17, 18

Tell about a father and his afflicted son.

Why had the disciples been embarrassed?

#### Verses 2, 3

Why did Jesus go into the mountain, and with whom?

Describe the transfiguration.

#### Verses 19-22a

What did Jesus say?

Give the conversation between Jesus and this father.

What at that moment happened to the son?

How long had the son been so possessed of the evil spirit?

#### Verse 4

Who appeared, and what did they talk about?

#### Verses 22b-27

How did this father show his doubts?

What did Jesus say to him, and what did he mean?

What did Jesus command the demon?

What did the people say?

What did Jesus do?

Discuss the reflections.

#### Verses 7, 8

What is said of a cloud and a voice?

What gave that voice peculiar significance?

Quote and discuss Deut. 18:15.

Lesson VIII—February 20, 1944

### JESUS TEACHES TRUE GREATNESS

Mark 9:33-39; 10:13-16, 42-45

33 And they came to Capernaum: and when he was in the house he asked them. What were ye reasoning on the way?

34 But they held their peace: for they had disputed one with another on the way, who was the greatest.

35 And he sat down, and called the twelve; and he saith unto them, If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all.

36 And he took a little child, and set him in the midst of them: and taking him in his arms, he said unto them,

37 Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

38 John said unto him, Teacher, we saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followed not us.

39 But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man who shall do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me.

13 And they were bringing unto him little children, that he should touch them: and the disciples rebuked them.

14 But when Jesus saw it, he was moved with indignation, and said unto them. Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God.

15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein. :

!6 And he took them in his arms, and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.

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

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

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

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

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"The Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Phil. 2:1-11.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

February 14.	M	The Divine Teacher (Mark 9:30-32; 10:32-34)
February 15.	T	Greatness in Childlikeness (Mark 9:33-37; 10:13-10)
February 16.	W	Greatness in Brotherhood (Mark 9:38-41)
February 17.	T	Greatness in Beneficence (Mark 10:17-23)
February 18.	F	Greatness in Service (Mark 10:41,45)
February 19.	S	Greatness of John the Baptist (Matt. 11:7-15)
February 20.	S	"Thy Gentleness Hath Made Me Great" (Ps/18:28'35)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—A.D. 30 or 31.

*Places.*—Capernaum, and some point beyond the Jordan.

*Persons.*—Jesus, his disciples, some children, and probably the parents of these children.

*Lesson Links.*—It is a pity that even in churches we sometimes find someone who likes to boss everything that goes on, but it has always been so. Even the beloved apostle John found one who loved to dominate even him. "I wrote somewhat unto the church: but Diotrophes, who loveth to have the Preeminence among them, receiveth us not. 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." (3 John 9, 10.) The church that Diotrophes bossed had a serious problem on its hands, and so does any church that has a man in it who tries to control everything that goes on. This is especially true if such a man is a man of ability. Under the domination of such a man the spiritual life of the church gradually dries up. Such a man is lacking in love for God, for the church, and for the brethren. "Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own." (1 Cor. 13:4, 5)

"For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but so to think as to think soberly." (Rom. 12:3.) And knowledge, though necessary, must be balanced by love, else it puffs up. "Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth." (1 Cor. 8:1.)

This striving for pre-eminence manifests itself in many ways. The struggle for wealth is not always due to a love of money, but is often due to a desire for pre-eminence in the world of finance. Some use every possible scheme to come out on top in the field of politics. And worst of all is the man who loves to have pre-eminence in the church, be he preacher or elder. None of these lovers of pre-eminence has any use for a man he cannot use to further his ambitions. Diotrophes opposed the apostle John, because he could not use John in his scheme to dominate the church; and others that he could not use, he cast out of the church. Now, if a man by honesty and diligence gains a position of prominence, that is well; let him use that influence for good.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### **Jesus Rebukes Selfish Ambition (Verses 33-35)**

After the events of the preceding lesson Jesus and his disciples came down through Galilee; "and he would not that any man should know it." On the way he again told his disciples of his coming death and resurrection; but they were so full of their own ideas about a worldly kingdom and places of honor in that kingdom that what he said made no impression on them. It is not surprising that they thought the kingdom of Christ would be a worldly kingdom; for they knew of no other sort, and could not as yet conceive of any other sort. In such kingdoms there are places of honor, and naturally they wonder which of them would occupy the highest places. They were much like politicians of today—disputing about who was best fitted to occupy the highest place of honor. This disputing among themselves occurred along the way to Capernaum. "And they came to Capernaum." If it seems to the student that Matthew's account and Mark's do not agree, he should remember that each writer gives only a condensed report. When they were in the house the disciples asked Jesus, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Of course they did not intend that Jesus should know that they had been disputing among themselves on that very point, but by a question Jesus gave them to understand that he knew about their discussion. "What were ye reasoning on the way?" That question shamed them into silence. Then Jesus sat down, and called the twelve about him, and said to them, "If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all." There is a difference between being counted the greatest and really being the greatest. The Pharisees loved to be considered great, and to have the chief places in any gathering; but they knew not in what greatness consisted. Jesus said to them, "Ye are they that justify yourselves in the sight of men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God." (Luke 16:15.) To seek the glory of men utterly unfits one for being a true believer in Christ Jesus, and for a place in the kingdom of heaven. "How can ye believe, who receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from



the only God ye seek not?" (John 5:44.) The disciples had not learned that the greatest servant is the greatest person in the sight of God. Man's acclaim does not recommend a man to God. Humility, and a willingness to serve wherever one can be of most use, no matter how lowly the service may be, is true greatness.

### **A Child as an Object Lesson (Verses 36-39)**

Jesus would give an object lesson to these ambitious disciples, an example of what they at heart should be. "He took a little child, and set him in the midst of them." Matthew says he called to him a child; the child was therefore old enough to come at his bidding. According to Matthew Jesus first said, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18:3, 4.) We are not to be like children in all respects. "Brethren, be not children in mind: yet in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men." (1 Cor. 14:20.) And children are free from worldly ambition. This is the point Jesus was emphasizing, for that was the lesson the apostles needed at that time. To be great in the kingdom of God one must be humble and unselfish—free from worldly ambition. When brethren engage in a mad scramble for places of honor and gain, it shows how far they have missed the ideal set forth by Christ; such have not the spirit of Christ, and are none of his.

Since we are to become as little children, it seems evident that the phrase "such little children" refers to true believers, to those who become as little children. (Compare with Matt. 18:5, 6.) To receive such a one in the name of Christ, that is, to receive such a one as a Christian should, is to receive both Christ and God. Yet the average church member shows a decided preference for the man, even the preacher, who pretends to be important. It was so even in the days of the apostles. (James 2:1-4.) To find that Jesus knew of their disputing along the way about which was the greatest, and then to be rebuked for their worldly ambition, was bound to make the apostles feel uncomfortable. It seems that John thought to relieve the situation somewhat by diverting the attention of Jesus to some one else, and getting him to endorse what they had done. "Teacher, we saw on casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followed not us." As the man was casting out demons in the name of Christ, they should have known that God was with him, and that they should have bidden him Godspeed. He was not of another religion; he could not have cast out demons in the name of Christ, had not Christ given him authority to do so. But the man would not come along in the immediate company of the followers of Christ. John and the others could not boss him. And again they brought a rebuke upon themselves.

### **Jesus Blesses Little Children (Mark 10:13-16)**

None but their parents would be so likely to bring these children to Jesus. Matthew says they brought these children to Jesus that he might lay his hands on them and pray. It is said that parents sometimes took their children to the head man of the synagogue that he might bless them. It was natural therefore for these parents

to bring their children to Jesus for a like reason. "And the disciples rebuked them." The disciples evidently meant well; but, as some one has said, a person may mean well and do ill. And the closer you are to the Lord, the more harm you may do by your well-meant, but ill-chosen, words. It seems that the disciples, for some reason, thought that bringing the children to Jesus was a needless interference with what they considered weightier matters. How little they knew of the Master's mind! But when Jesus saw their interference, he was moved with indignation. The disciples were entirely too officious. Children in the home, and the love and care of, parents for their children meant much to Jesus, and it angered him for his own disciples to rudely drive parents and children from him.

When people try to find support in this incident for the sprinkling of children, they are certainly hard pressed. Nothing is said about baptizing the children. It is singular that these advocates of infant sprinkling hunt so persistently for scripture to prove that infants should be baptized, and then as persistently hunt for scriptures to prove that it is not necessary for adults to be baptized! Had the sprinkling of children been the practice of Jesus and his disciples, the disciples would not have rebuked these parents for bringing their children. On the contrary, they would have praised these parents for bringing their children, and would have exhorted others to do likewise. To the disciples Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God." That is, suffer them to come to me for the purpose named; namely, that he should lay his hands on them and pray. The kingdom of God must be received in a childlike, trusting spirit, without the taint of worldly pride and ambition. And then Jesus did what the parents had in view in bringing the children to him. "And he took them in his arms, and blessed them, laying his hands upon them." And what a blessing children are in homes where parents are real fathers and mothers to them.

### **Jesus Speaks of True Greatness (Verses 42-45)**

Jesus was on his last journey to Jerusalem. Though Jesus had just told them plainly of his coming trials and death, it seems to have made no impression on the disciples; at least, not on James and John. They still had in mind that Jesus would soon establish a kingdom like their kingdom of old, and they were determined to get in their bid for the highest places of honor in that kingdom. Through their mother Salome they made their bid. Compare Mark 10:35 with Matt. 20:20, 21. Jesus told them that their request came of ignorance. "And when the ten heard it, they began to be moved with indignation concerning James and John." (Verse 41.) They felt that James and John were seeking an undue advantage over them. Then Jesus called them to him, and made to them the speech which constitutes this section of our printed text. Ambitious James and John and the indignant ten needed to be sobered down. Jesus, in effect, told James and John, that, in seeking the highest places, they were manifesting the spirit of their hated Gentile rulers—they wanted the highest places of authority, so as to lord it over the others. To be told that they were manifesting the spirit of their hated Gentile rulers was a severe rebuke, and should have had a sobering effect on them; and the rebuke should have given some satisfaction to the

indignant ten. "But it is not so among you." There would be no such places of authority among the disciples of Christ as James and John asked for. None would lord it over another—none would exercise authority over others. Greatness would be determined by service. To be first of all—greatest of all—one must be servant of all. "For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Jesus served both the physical and the spiritual needs of humanity. Humanity's greatest need was deliverance from the bondage of sin. A ransom is a price paid for redeeming, either from slavery or from captivity. The sinner has been led captive by the devil and made to be a servant of sin. Jesus gave his life to redeem the sinner. He therefore is both redeemer and ransom.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

A group of brethren, even preachers, who should know what Christianity is, strive against each other for some coveted place. Such men are so far removed from the spirit of Christ that they do not know what it is to be a Christian; nor can such men edify the church. Love seeks not her own good, but the good of others.

Too many church members would rather be served than to serve. They do not like to be slaves to others; they like to lead, to command, to give orders; and then they like to boast of what great things they are doing. And some like to be bossed; they want some one to tell them what to do. They are willing to pay a successful boss a good salary; and the salaried boss brags on the people he can use.

Jesus was the greatest of all teachers, yet the disciples were slow to understand much of his plain teaching. This should admonish us to be patient with those who are slow to understand the plain teaching of the New Testament. Many of them have been drilled in sectarian teachings and practices all their lives; and yet many of these are willing to learn. Let us patiently teach those who are willing to learn.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Patience in teaching others.  
 Things that tend to destroy home life today.  
 The evils of worldly and selfish ambition.  
 True greatness.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
 Discuss the character and conduct of Diotrephes.  
 Discuss the harm done by striving for pre-eminence.

#### Verses 33-35

Why were the disciples slow to understand what Jesus said about his death?  
 Tell about their dispute, and what Jesus said to

them.

What was one of the chief traits of the Pharisees?  
 Discuss selfish ambition.

#### Verses 36-39

Tell about the object lesson Jesus taught the ambitious disciples.  
 In what sense must one become as a little child?  
 Why do people look up to the one who assumes importance?  
 Tell what John said, and the reply Jesus made.

**Mark 10:13-16**

Tell about the incident of the bringing of little children to Jesus.  
Why is there no support in the incident for infant sprinkling?

**Verses 42-45**

What did James and John see?  
What effect did that have on the ten?  
Discuss verses 42-45.  
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IX—February 27, 1944

**JESUS PRESENTS HIMSELF AS THE MESSIAH**

Mark 11:1-10, 15-18

1 And when they draw nigh unto Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth two of his disciples,

2 And saith unto them, Go your way into the village that is over against you: and straightway as ye enter into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon no man ever yet sat; loose him, and bring him.

3 And if any one say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye, The Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him back hither.

4 And they went away, and found a colt tied at the door without in the open street; and they loose him.

5 And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?

6 And they said unto them even as Jesus had said: and they let them go.

7 And they bring the colt unto Jesus, and east on him their garments; and he sat upon him.

8 And many spread their garments upon the way; and others branches, which they had cut from the fields.

9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord:

10 Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David: Hosanna in the highest.

15 And they come to Jerusalem: and he entered into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and them that bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold the doves;

16 And he would not suffer that any man should carry a vessel through the temple.

17 And he taught, and said unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? but ye have made it a den of robbers.

18 And the chief priests and the scribes heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, for all the multitude was astonished at his teaching.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Again the high priest asked him, and saith unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am." (Mark 14:61, 62,)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Isa. 32:1-8.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

February 21. M

February 22. T

February 23. W

February 24. T

February 25. F

February 26. S

February 27. S

The Messiah Acclaimed (Mark 11:1-10)

Authority of the Messiah (Mark 11:11-22)

Accountability to the Messiah (Mark 12:1-12)

The Messiah and the Nation (Mark 12:13-17)

The Messiah and the Home (Mark 12:18-27)

The Messiah and the Individual (Mark 12:23-34)

The Messiah and the Heavenly Host (Rev. 5:9-13)

**LESSON SETTINGS**

*Time.*—A.D. 30 or 31—Sunday and Monday of the week of the crucifixion.

*Places.*—Bethany, the Mount of Olives, the temple in Jerusalem.

*Persons.*--Jesus, his disciples, the multitudes, the traders in the temple, the chief priests, and the scribes.

*Lesson Links.*--On the night when Jesus was born, an angel announced to shepherds who were "keeping watch by night over their flock, . . . Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2: 8-11.) When John began his ministry, God gave him a sign by which he was to know when he baptized the redeemer. The demonstrations at the baptism of Jesus proved to John that he had baptized him who was to come. "And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." (John 1: 29-34.) The next day two of John's disciples heard him say, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" and they followed Jesus to his abiding place. One of these was Andrew; he soon went to his brother Simon, and said, "We have found the Messiah." When Philip brought Nathanael to Jesus, in a few words Jesus so convinced him that Nathanael said, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel." (John 1: 35-49.) After patiently teaching his disciples over a period of many months. Jesus asked them, "Who say ye that I am?" Peter, speaking the sentiments of all, said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. 16: 13-16.) But until the proper time came he would not allow them to announce him as the Christ. He evidently put no restraint on them during the week of the crucifixion. Even he himself, when questioned by the high priest, acknowledged himself to be the Christ, the Son of God. (Matt. 26:63, 64.) And so he did before Pilate. "Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." (John 18:37.) We know not what more Jesus said to Pilate about his kingdom and the nature of his reign; but he certainly convinced him that he would not establish such a kingdom as the Jews expected the Messiah to establish, for Pilate said, "I find no crime in him." (John 18: 38.)

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Jesus Sends Two Disciples on an Errand (Verses I, 2)

Little is known of Bethphage. We have this from Hastings' Bible Dictionary: "Bethphage ('house of figs'). The place whence Christ, on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem, sent his disciples to fetch the ass. It must have been close to Bethany, and is traditionally identified with Abu Dis, a village that satisfies this condition." Bethany, the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, the devoted friends of Jesus, was situated on the eastern slope of Mount Olivet, or Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem on the road to Jericho. Here also dwelt Simon the leper, who once made a feast for Jesus. (Mark 14: 3-9.) It must be that at some previous time Jesus had healed him of his leprosy, for lepers were required by law to dwell apart from other people. (Lev. 13:45, 46; Num. 5:1-4.) On his last visit previous to this Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. It is evident that Jesus loved to visit his friends in this quiet village. During the week then about to begin Jesus spent the nights in Bethany. It was evidently a more prosperous village then than now. There are said to be about twenty miserable huts in the village now.

"In the place there remains not one mark of physical beauty. The streets, if it be lawful to call them streets, are crooked, strewn with rocks and debris, and are only paths over which vehicles do not pass. The people living in Bethany are such as you would expect from the external appearance of the town. The children are under your feet at every step, with hands extended, reproachful eyes, and plaintive tones, as they beg for money."—C. R. Nichol, in *Bible Notes on the Holy Land*.

Jesus was preparing for his entry into Jerusalem. To two of his disciples he said, "Go your way into the village that is over against you." There they would find a colt tied. "Loose him, and bring him." His instructions were exact—they would find the colt tied inside the village, at the very entrance. The disciples were so slow to understand the powers of Jesus, that we wonder if they discussed, as they went, how he could know what he was talking about, or whether he did really know.

### **"The Lord Hath Need of Him" (Verses 3-6)**

The owner of the colt must have been a disciple of Jesus, or else a friend. It is possible that Jesus had arranged with the owner for the colt. To secure the owner's consent for them to take the colt the disciples had only to say, "The Lord hath need of him." Certainly the owner was not an enemy of Jesus. "And straightway he will send him back hither." This the disciples were to say to the owner to assure him that the colt would be returned promptly. Even now that is a good plan for borrowers to follow; but some professed Christians have not learned that lesson, or else fail to heed it.

It seems that the faith of these two disciples would have been increased at finding things just as Jesus said they would. And the very question Jesus had anticipated was asked them. "And they said unto them even as Jesus had said: and they let them go." All things turned out just as Jesus had said they would, and this must have excited the wonder and increased the faith of these disciples.

### **The Great Demonstration (Verses 7-10)**

The student should be sure to read the parallel passages—Matt. 21:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:9-19. Jesus must have spent the Sabbath in Bethany. On the first day of the week, our Sunday, he was ready to go into Jerusalem. Crowds had already gathered in Jerusalem to be ready for the Feast of the Passover, which was then only six days off. Here is what was taking place in Jerusalem before it was known there that Jesus was on his way: "Now the passover of the Jews was at hand: and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the passover, to purify themselves. They sought therefore for Jesus, and spake one with another, as they stood in the temple, What think ye? That he will not come to the feast? 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." (John 11:55-57.) But Jesus would not be a coward, and slip into the city as secretly as possible. No one would have to tell where he was; he would show them where he was in a way that no one in Jerusalem would fail to know. After that the chief priests and the Pharisees could make the most they could of it. When he was ready he started for the city. He evidently went by

the short route over the Mount of Olives, for Luke informs us that the shouting and praising God began "at the descent of the mount of Olives." (Luke 19:37.) At this point they were in full view of the city. In honor of him "many spread their garments upon the way; and others branches, which they had cut from the fields." The crowds in the city, hearing and seeing this great demonstration, came in throngs to join in the demonstration. It was a joyous throng, waving palm branches, and crying, "Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David: Hosanna in the highest." They were expecting him to set up immediately a kingdom like the kingdom of David, which would bring the whole world into subjection to their king. Jesus did not tell them plainly that they were mistaken in such expectations, and yet he did tell them in these words: "And when he drew nigh, he saw the city and wept over R, saying, If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall dash thee to the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." (Luke 19:41-44.) What a picture! What compassion! The Son of God in the midst of such demonstrations weeping over the city which was under the absolute control of enemies who were determined to put him to death! He did not raise their false hopes higher by promising them such a kingdom as they expected; instead, he pronounced their national doom. But the people were too full of excitement and enthusiasm to pay any attention to anything save what they had in mind. People carried away with such excitement do not think.

### **Jesus Cleanses the Temple (Verses 15-18)**

This is the next day after the events of the first part of our lesson. On that day he had seen how things were being carried on in the temple. (Verse 11.) This day he is determined to clear the temple of such corrupt practices as he had seen. Most likely it was animals for offerings that were sold in the temple. People coming a long distance could not conveniently bring animals for sacrifices. This made it possible for some men to carry on a profitable stock business. The fact that those who came from foreign countries bringing the money of their country made it possible for some to carry on a profitable exchange business. The priests had charge of the temple, and of course received their part of the profits made by those who carried on such business in the temple. But the temple was not built for a trade yard, but for worship. It was God's house. To these traders Jesus said, "It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer: but ye make it a den of robbers." A den is a place of refuge, a place of security. This shows that these traders were under the full protection of the temple police. These traders therefore were not only profaning God's house, but were robbing the people in this unholy procedure. Had these men been carrying on an honest business in the proper place, Jesus would not have interfered with them. They had no regard for that which was holy. It is no wonder that these men were dishonest, for the man who will sacrifice the principles of his religion and profane God's holy

things for profit will also sacrifice his honesty for profit. It will be noticed that Jesus drove both the seller and the buyer out of the temple; they were alike guilty. Had there been no buyers, there would have been no sellers. And that is true today. No man would engage in selling things unlawfully if no one bought what he offered for sale. The bootlegger could not carry on his business if no one bought his wares. There would be no black markets if there were no black buyers. And there would be no selling of false religion from the pulpit if people did not pay for it.

The scribes as well as the chief priests must have been reaping some profit from the unholy traffic in the temple, for they joined in with the chief priests in seeking how they might destroy Jesus; they wanted desperately to get him out of the way. No matter how unlawful a traffic may be, those who are profiting by it become enraged at those who even seek to interfere with their business. Criminals hate those who enforce the law. It is no wonder therefore that the chief priests and the scribes became enraged at Jesus. But what they saw and heard the day before made them afraid to do anything openly to Jesus; "for they feared him, for all the multitude was astonished at his teaching." They feared what the multitude might do to them. It seems that the demonstration that accompanied his entrance into Jerusalem so impressed the Pharisees that they had about given up hope of being able to do anything to him. "The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Behold how ye prevail nothing; lo, the world is gone after him." (John 12:19.)

### SOME REFLECTIONS

It seems that nothing else is so blinding as false theories in religion. This is especially true when people begin to speculate and form theories concerning God's future plans. These speculations are always colored by what the speculators and theorists want for the future. The Jews were under Roman rule; it was especially galling to them to be ruled by "Gentile dogs." Very naturally they wanted deliverance from a rule so obnoxious to them. They wanted a great kingdom of their own. Their ideas of the Messiah and his kingdom were therefore shaped and colored by what they most earnestly desired. Because Jesus did not measure up to their desires and wrong expectations they were more bitterly opposed to him than they were to their hated rulers. In spite of the fact that they knew he healed the blind, and raised the dead, and performed other great miracles, they rejected and killed him. And the desire today for political security color many people's minds and theories as to what Jesus will do when he comes again. Such theories are set forth with great zeal and positiveness in every period of great stress. Why the Jews rejected Christ at his first coming should warn people against building theories concerning his second coming like the theories the Jews had concerning his first coming. It might unfit them for his second coming as effectively as it unfitted the Jews for his first coming.

The church is now God's temple. (1 Cor. 3:16, 17.) It should not be used as a means of helping along any trading or trafficking. The church should be neither a beggar nor trader. Let no man defile God's holy temple.



**TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION**

The "triumphal entry."  
 Cleaning the temple—its lesson to us.  
 The sin of disrespecting holy things.  
 Why the Jews rejected Jesus.  
 The evils of false theories.

**QUESTIONS**

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

**Lesson Settings**

Give time, places, and persons.  
 Give outline of matters found in Lesson Links.

**Verses 1, 2**

Where were Bethphage and Bethany located?  
 Give what information you can about these two villages.  
 Tell about the orders Jesus gave to two disciples.

**Verses 3-6**

What indicates that the owner of the colt was a disciple, or friend of Jesus?  
 What were the two to promise the owner?  
 What circumstances in the case would likely increase the faith of the disciples?

**Verses 7-10**

How came such crowds to be in Jerusalem at

this time?

What had the multitudes discussed about Jesus?  
 What orders had the chief priests and Pharisees given?  
 What evidently did they think Jesus might do?  
 Tell the manner of his entrance, and how the people publicly acclaimed him.  
 Why would he weep over Jerusalem?  
 What did he say would be its doom?

**Verses 15-18**

Tell how the temple had been profaned and what Jesus did about it.  
 How had the temple become a den of robbers?  
 Why did Jesus drive the buyers out of the temple?  
 Discuss how evildoers despise those who interfere with their evil practices.  
 Why did the chief priests and scribes become so enraged at what Jesus did?  
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson X—March 5, 1944

**JESUS URGES HIS DISCIPLES TO WATCH**

Mark 13:3-10, 31-37

3 And as he sat on the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately,

4 Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when these things are all about to be accomplished?

5 And Jarius began to say unto them, Take heed that no man lead you astray.

6 Many shall come in my name, saying, I am he; and shall lead many astray.

7 And when ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, be not troubled: these things must needs come to pass; but the end is not yet.

8 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there shall be earthquakes in divers places; there shall be famines: these things are the beginning of travail.

9 But take ye heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in synagogues shall ye be beaten; and before governors and kings shall ye stand for my sake, for a testimony unto them.

10 And the gospel must first be preached unto all the nations.

31 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

32 But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

33 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

34 It is as when a man, sojourning in another country, having left his house, and given authority to his servants, to each one his work, commanded also the porter to watch.

35 Watch therefore: for ye know not when the lord of the house cometh,  
 whether at even, or at midnight, or at cockcrowing, or in the morning;  
 36 Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.  
 37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Watch therefore: for ye know not when the lord of the house cometh."  
 (Mark 13:35.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—1 Thess. 5:1-11.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

February	28.	M	Warning Against Deceivers (Mark 13:3-10)
February	29.	T	Watching for the Lord (Mark 13:31-37)
March	1.	W	Wisdom in Watching (Matt. 24:45-51)
March	2.	T	Blessedness in Watching (Luke 12:35-40)
March	3.	F	Watch and Be Sober (1 Thess. 5:1-11)
March	4.	S	Watch Thou in All Things (2 Tim. 4:1-8)
March	5.	S	Vigilance and' Victory (1 Pet. 5:6-11)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—A.D. 30 or 31. It seems to have been Tuesday of the week of the crucifixion.

*Place.*—The Mount of Olives. If the student will consult a Bible Dictionary or an Encyclopedia, he will find more information about the Mount of Olives than space will allow to be given here. *Persons.*—Jesus and his disciples.

*Lesson Links.*—Our last lesson ended with chapter 11, verse 18. Jesus continued to show himself openly in and about the temple, and was in frequent controversy with those who wanted to kill him. Space will not allow a discussion of the matters about which these debates were held. It would be well for the student to read the intervening scriptures. He should also read Matt. 24 and Luke 21:5-36, and also the entire chapter from which our lesson is taken. It is important that we notice the conversation that led to the matters of this lesson. Matthew (24:1, 2) gives this report: "And Jesus went out from the temple, and was going on his way; and his disciples came to him to show him the buildings of the temple. But he answered and said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Mark says: "And as he went forth out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Teacher, behold, what manner of stones and what manner of buildings! And Jesus said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left here one stone upon another, which shall not be thrown down." Luke says: "And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and offerings, he said, As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in which there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." The disciples, as well as all other Jews, took great pride in that massive and beautiful building. They naturally were greatly amazed at the words of Jesus. That such a prophecy concerning such a magnificent building should be uttered in a time of peace was astonishing beyond measure; but that prophecy was fulfilled, even though the Roman general Titus tried to restrain his soldiers from doing it any injury.

**COMMENTS ON THE LESSON****The Disciples Ask Jesus About This Destruction (Verses 3, 4)**

Matt. 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 go together; and if we would reach anything like correct conclusions in the study of these chapters, or either of them separately, we must note carefully the questions Jesus was answering. Matthew gives this report of the questions: "And as he sat on the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Mark says: "And as he sat on the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when these things are all about to be accomplished?" Luke says: "And they asked him, saying, Teacher, when therefore shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when these things are about to come to pass?" Many theories have been advanced concerning these questions and the answers Jesus gave to them. Some commentators, but not all of them, think the question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming?" refers to the second visible appearing of Christ, that coming which is yet to be. But that makes Matthew's report cover more ground than the reports of Mark and Luke, and that makes Mark and Luke not reliable reporters of what Jesus said. Besides, in their states of understanding at that time, how could the disciples ask a question about his second visible coming? Jesus had told them that he would be killed and raised again, but had said nothing at that time about ascending to heaven and later returning again. And it does not seem that they had been convinced that he would be killed. The Jewish idea was that the Messiah, when he came to earth, would abide forever. (John 12:32-34.) The disciples could not therefore have been asking about a future return to the earth from heaven. Besides, not every coming of the Lord spoken of in the Bible refers to the second visible coming. Sometimes the Lord comes to visit judgments on the people. (See Isa. 13:5; Rev. 2:5, 16; 3:3, 11.) From the positive way in which Jesus spoke of the destruction of the temple, does it not seem very likely that the disciples would think that he himself meant to destroy it? They expected him soon to become king in Jerusalem. Compare these two questions from Matthew and Mark: "What shall be the sign of thy coming?" "What shall be the sign when these things are all about to be accomplished?" The disciples knew the temple was under the complete control of the enemies of Jesus.

**Jesus Warns the Disciples Against Being Led Astray (Verses 5, 6)**

One of the very great weaknesses of human beings is their readiness to be led off into all sorts of false ideas and fantastic notions. This is especially true in times of great excitement and stress. Of course not all are so easily led astray. Not even the disciples of Christ are free from all sorts of delusions. Hence the admonition: "Take heed that no man lead you astray," Perilous times were coming to the land of the Jews; in such times the disciples would need to be firm in their faith and diligent in practice to protect themselves against being led astray by schemers of all sorts. In times

of trouble, such as was coming, the average person would be governed by his emotions more than by his intelligence. Some would claim to be the Christ returned to give them deliverance. A man with such claims, if he had rabble-rousing powers, could almost deceive the very elect; he would gain a following among the easily excitable and highly emotional types of people. As the time of the destruction of Jerusalem drew near, and troubles increased and the people became more and more perplexed, these fake leaders would increase their powers over the people. And many would be led astray. The exhortation and admonition given in these verses were given especially to prepare the disciples for the tribulations that were to come upon the Jews. But even so, people are never free from the danger of being led astray; and so all along through the New Testament we find admonitions to Christians not to be led astray. "Take heed what ye hear." (Mark 4:24.) "Take heed therefore how ye hear." (Luke 8:18.) It is necessary for us to take heed what we hear and how we hear, else we shall certainly be led astray. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. 10:12.) "Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God." (Heb. 3:12.)

### **Signs of Approaching Doom of Jerusalem (Verses 7, 8)**

When there are wars and rumors of wars people are too ready to conclude that the end of the world is nigh. They forget that all down the ages there have been wars and rumors of wars; but Jesus was not here speaking of the end of the world, but of the destruction of the temple, and along with that also the destruction of Jerusalem and the whole Jewish system. The wars and rumors of wars would be those that directly concerned the Jewish people. Historians tell us of threats of Roman emperors, and of uprisings of the Gentiles against the Jews. They tell us also of pestilences and great earthquakes. These things did not mark the end of the Jewish system, but were the beginning of the tribulations that were to come upon them.

### **Persecutions Would Precede the End (Verses 9, 10)**

They were to take heed to themselves—see to it that they did not become involved in any needless complications that might bring avoidable persecutions upon themselves. The persecutions here mentioned were to occur before the destruction of Jerusalem, while the Jewish system was still being operated by Jewish authorities. Every synagogue had certain powers over the Jews in its territory, and might punish certain infractions of the law. How extensive these judicial powers were we are not informed. But the language of Jesus shows that the authorities in the synagogues inflicted punishment to the extent, at least, of beating offenders or supposed offenders. As the disciples were being gradually weaned away from observing all the required ceremonies, this would furnish the authorities an excuse for beating them. The higher authorities were allowed to inflict the death penalty. It seems that the Roman authorities granted greater powers to the Sanhedrin than it possessed when Jesus was put to death, as is shown in the death of Stephen and the activities of Saul of Tarsus. The disciples were also to be

brought before governors and kings. Notice the actions of Herod, as reported in Acts 12:1-6, and also what happened to the apostle Paul. This was but a small portion of the persecutions suffered by the disciples before the destruction of Jerusalem. "And the gospel must first be preached unto all the nations." And Paul bears testimony that this "must" was fulfilled before the destruction of Jerusalem. Paul was put to death before Jerusalem was destroyed. As to his testimony, read Rom. 10:17; Col. 1:6, 23. While Jesus was speaking of the persecutions they were to suffer before the Jewish system was destroyed, it is a fact that persecutions continued, and do continue. "Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3:12.) Suffering persecution from without is bad enough; but what is worse, we are sometimes in perils among false brethren, as was Paul. But there is consolation. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him." (James 1:12.)

### **"My Words Shall Not Pass Away" (Verses 31, 32)**

In studying this speech of Jesus we meet with difficulties, no matter what view we adopt as to what is meant in this speech as to his coming. Verse 30 presents a very great difficulty in our way, if we try to adopt the idea that the coming mentioned is the second visible appearing of Christ, the appearing that is yet to be. The marginal reading in verse 29 shows us that the words "he is nigh" might as well read "it is nigh." Now notice verse 30: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, until all these things be accomplished." This seems to be the direct answer to the question the disciples asked, "What shall be the sign when these things are all about to be accomplished?" These things therefore would all be accomplished during the lifetime of some who were present. The second visible appearing of Christ is yet to be, and all of those then living have long since passed away. It seems certain therefore that the second coming of Christ had not been among the things mentioned. Christ's words did not fail; they are enduring. "Heaven" here must refer to regions around the earth, and not to the home of bliss where God dwells. Because of our limited understanding, Verse 32 sounds strange to us. It is easy to grasp the idea that neither men nor angels would know when these things would be accomplished; but our minds cannot see how the Son of God, one of the Godhead, would not know, but we can believe what Jesus said.

### **"Watch" (Verses 33-37)**

Take heed—watch—pray. These are always necessary. It was necessary that the disciples keep an eye on conditions about them, so as to be able to see from the signs the near approach of the doom of Jerusalem; otherwise they might be engulfed in the coming destruction. Jesus had warned them to flee to the mountains when they saw certain developments. (Verses 14-19.) They were to watch developments as well as their own conduct. The parable Jesus then spoke emphasized duty and watchfulness. The man who went into another country had given his servants certain authority and certain work to do, and commanded his porter to watch. It does not mean that the porter was to stand and watch the road to see when

the householder put in his appearance; he was to keep watch, so that no undesirable characters were allowed to come in. The parable cannot be made to fit in all its parts, for there was only one porter to keep watch, but all disciples are commanded to watch. "And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." (1 Cor. 16:13.) "So then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober." "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." (Rev. 3:3.) This does not mean that they were to stand gazing into heaven, but the connection shows that they were to watch themselves to see that they did right. (See verse 2.)

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Some seem to think the whole speech made by Jesus in answer to the questions asked by the disciples centered around the second visible coming of Christ. If that be so, how can we account for Mark's and Luke's reporting a speech in answer to a question they had not reported, and failed entirely to answer the questions they did report? So far as their report goes, the disciples had not asked anything about the coming of Christ.

To keep from being led astray people must know the truth. But even that is not enough; we must not only know the truth, but must know that we know it. If a person merely has a general idea as to what the truth is, he may hesitate and doubt when someone calls his position in question. Did you ever spell a word correctly, and then some one said your spelling was not correct? Like as not you were then not so sure of your spelling. If you knew how to spell the word, and knew that you knew how, it was quite different. The same principle holds good in religious matters.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Compare what Jesus says with what Josephus says about the destruction of Jerusalem.  
Take heed to yourselves.  
Watch. Pray.

### QUESTIONS

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

What evidence that other comings are mentioned?

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
Give some of the things that happened between the events of last lesson and this.  
Which writers record the speech from which our lesson is taken—where recorded?  
Give the conversation about the temple.

#### Verses 5, 6

Why are so many people easily led astray?  
What shows that disciples are not free from that danger?  
Why are people more easily led astray in times of great stress and trouble?  
Give passages showing that we now need to take heed.

#### Verses 3, 4

Give the questions the disciples asked Jesus as he sat on Mount Olivet.  
Could the disciples at that time know anything about the second coming of Christ?  
Give reasons for answer.

#### Verses 7, 8

What was Jesus talking about in these verses?  
How do many people use what is said in these verses?

**Verses 9, 10**

Give the contents of these verses and discuss them.

What about persecutions now?

Give passages.

**Verses 31, 32**

Quote verse 30, and discuss verses 31, 32.

**Verses 33-37**

Discuss these verses, verse by verse.

Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson XI—March 12, 1944

**JESUS BETRAYED, DENIED, AND CONDEMNED**

Mark 14:10, 11, 53, 54, 66-72; 15:12-15

10 And Judas Iscariot, he that was one of the twelve, went away unto the chief priests, that he might deliver him unto them.

11 And they, when they heard it, were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently deliver him unto them.

53 And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and there come together with him all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

12 And Pilate again answered and said unto them, What then shall I do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews?

13 And they cried out again, Crucify him.

14 And Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out exceedingly, Crucify him.

15 And Pilate, wishing to content the multitude, released unto them Barabbas, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." (Isa. 53:3.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Isa. 52:13 to 53:3.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

March	6.	M	Jesus Betrayed (Mark 14:10, 11, 17, 18, 43-46)
March	7.	T	Jesus in the Upper Room (Mark 14:22-26)
March	8.	W	Jesus in Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-42)
March	9.	T	Jesus Arraigned (Mark 14:60-64)
March	10.	F	Jesus Denied (Mark 14:66-72)
March	11.	S	Jesus Condemned (Mark 15:12-20)
March	12.	S	"I Shall Yet Praise Him" (Psalm 42:1-5)

**LESSON SETTINGS**

*Time.*—A.D. 30 or 31.

*Place.*—Jerusalem.

*Persons.*—Jesus and his enemies.

*Lesson Links.*—From the first of his ministry the scribes and Pharisees opposed Jesus, and this opposition soon grew into enmity, and that enmity grew more and more intense to the end. When this last passover feast which Jesus attended, in fact, the last under the law, was drawing near, the people who had gone early to Jerusalem, knowing that the leaders desired to kill Jesus, questioned among themselves as to whether he would attend the feast. They thought he might be afraid to show himself in Jerusalem. "They sought therefore for Jesus, and spake one with another, as they stood in the temple, What think ye? That he will not come to the feast? 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." (John 11:56, 57.) These chief priests and Pharisees had fully made up their mind to kill Jesus at the first opportunity. They thought he might slip into Jerusalem in as secret a way as possible; hence, this command, which evidently was a court order. But the manner of his entrance into Jerusalem astonished them beyond measure. When he appeared at the temple, with children shouting his praises and the demonstration as he entered Jerusalem still ringing in their ears, they were so dispirited and discouraged that they could do no more than offer a feeble protest at the shouting of the children. (Matt. 21:15-17.) They then said among themselves, "Behold how ye prevail nothing; lo, the world is gone after him." (John 12:19.) But they soon formed another plan; they would let Jesus alone until after the feast—until his friends and disciples had returned home. "Then were gathered together the chief priests, and the elders of the people, unto the court of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas; and they took counsel together that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him. But they said, Not during the feast, lest a tumult arise among the people." (Matt. 26:3-5.) This was their plan until they received help from an unexpected source.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### **Judas Sold His Lord (Verses 10, 11)**

Judas Iscariot was one of the twelve apostles. He, with the others, had formerly been sent on a peaching tour "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." In addition to preaching that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," they were commanded to "heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons." (Matt, 10:2-14.) Judas Iscariot had the same command and the same powers the other apostles had. But greed for money proved to be the cause of his downfall. The parallel verses in Luke say, "And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went away, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might deliver him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he consented, and sought opportunity to deliver him unto them in the absence of the multitude." (Luke 22:3-6.) From Matt. 26:14-16 we learn that Judas received thirty pieces of silver. If this refers to the Jewish shekel, then Judas received an amount equal to about fifteen dollars. And in that transaction Judas Iscariot bought himself a name that is a synonym of infamy. And so this high court of the Jews settled the fate of Jesus before he was arrested! That court and Judas—what a combination!



**Jesus Brought Before the High Priest (Verses 53, 54)**

Judas soon had an opportunity to fulfill his part of the trade he made with the chief priests. As if he had no evil purpose in his heart, he ate the passover with Jesus and the other apostles. (The student should read the entire chapter from which our lesson is taken, and also Matt. 26:14 to 27:26; Luke 22; 23:1-25; John 18; 19:1-16.) Judas left the room before the others did, having learned, of course, where he might rejoin them. The eleven knew not his purpose in leaving them; Jesus knew. Before leaving the room Jesus made a speech, and then uttered the longest prayer recorded in the New Testament. After this he and the disciples went out of the city, across the brook Kidron, into the Garden of Gethsemane on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. Here in great agony of soul he prayed to his Father. Here Judas, as if he did not know a band of officers was following him, came to Jesus and kissed him. This was a signal to the men following Judas. They knew then which of the group to seize. They then seized Jesus and led him away to the high priest. "So the band and the chief captain, and the officers of the Jews, seized Jesus and bound him, and led him to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, who was high priest that year." (John 18:12.) Annas had been high priest, but the Roman authorities took it upon themselves to set aside and appoint high priests, according to their own pleasure. It is likely that the Jews still thought of Annas as the real high priest; and so they led Jesus first to Annas, and then to Caiaphas. Peter followed afar off. It seems that all the others, excepting John, fled when they seized and bound Jesus. Matthew makes this report: "But Peter followed him afar off, unto the court of the high priest, and entered in, and sat with the officers, to see the end." (Matt. 26:58.) He wanted to know what would be the outcome of it all. He tried to appear neutral, a mere onlooker; and that got him into trouble. Certain ones wanted to know where he stood.

**Peter Denies Christ (Verses 66-71)**

"And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known unto the high priest, and entered in with Jesus into the court of the high priest; but Peter was standing at the door without. So the other disciple, who was known unto the high priest, went out and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter." (John 18:15, 16.) It is understood that this other disciple was John. No one asked him any questions, for they knew him to be a disciple of Christ; but not so with Peter. Earlier in the night Jesus said to his disciples, "All ye shall be offended in me this night." But Peter avowed that he would not deny Christ, even if all the others did. Jesus then told him that he would deny him three times that night. "Peter saith unto him, Even if I must die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples." (Matt. 26:31-35.) Let us not be too hard on Peter; all the disciples excepting him and John fled at the first sign of trouble. The maid who first questioned Peter and charged him with being with the Nazarene was the one who kept the door. (John 18:17.) But Peter said, "I am not," in answer to the question, "Art thou also one of this man's disciples?" They knew John was a disciple—the high priest knew John. Twice more Peter was accused of being

one of the followers of Jesus, and twice more he denied emphatically that he was. The last time they made the statement that he was one of them, "he began to curse, and to swear, I know not this man of whom ye speak." Like many another man, Peter foolishly thought cursing and swearing would add force to what he said.

### **Peter Thought, Then Wept (Verse 72)**

If Peter had done more thinking before he did so much talking, he would not have said so much. Jesus had said to Peter, "Verily I say unto thee, that thou to-day, even this night, before the cock crow twice, shall deny me thrice." Of his third denial Luke says, "And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said unto him, Before the cock crow this day thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly." (Luke 22:60-62.) When Peter thought on what he had done and had seen the look on his Lord's face, he was overwhelmed with shame and sorrow. If Peter had been allowed to fight in the garden as he tried to do, he would have died in the defense of his Lord, and made good his statement that he would die with him or go to prison with him. But things he could not understand had come upon him. He had believed Jesus to be the Messiah and that he would establish a great kingdom, and overcome his enemies; but now he was in the hands of enemies who were determined to kill. Peter was bewildered and cowed-too much so to think what he was saying; and yet he knew he should not have denied Jesus.

### **Christ Before Pilate (Mark 15:12-15)**

"And straightway in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes, and the whole council, held a consultation, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him up to Pilate." They had already decided to put Jesus to death; but though they were determined to put an innocent man to death, they wanted to carry out the forms of the law. They must pass sentence in the daytime. "Now, when morning was come, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death." (Matt. 27:1.) It was the determined purpose of the Sanhedrin, the high court of the Jews, to put Jesus to death. It was not the same as an individual killing Jesus on his own responsibility. The authority of the Jews was vested in this court through that court the nation acted. It was a national act, this killing of Jesus—murder by a nation.

Before Pilate they brought many accusations against Jesus, none of which they could prove; but Jesus made no answer to any of their charges. Pilate examined Jesus, and found no crime in him. "For he perceived that for envy the chief priests had delivered him up." Now here is a strange thing. Jesus had said before Pilate that he was king, and used the term "my kingdom." And yet Pilate said, "I find no crime in him," and sought to release him. If Jesus had come to establish such a kingdom as the Jews expected the Messiah to establish, and as some now affirm he came to establish, Pilate would have been bound by Roman law to pronounce him guilty of treason or rebellion. We know not how much Pilate learned from Jesus in his interviews with him, but we do know that he learned

enough to know that Jesus did not mean to set up a kingdom like the Jews expected, with his throne in Jerusalem, with the intention of delivering the Jews from Roman rule; otherwise he could not have said, "I find no fault in this man." Neither would he have pleaded with the Jews that he be let go. Pilate had a strange custom, the releasing of a prisoner at the passover, a prisoner whom the Jews themselves desired released. "And there was one called Barabbas, lying bound with them that had made insurrection, men who in the insurrection had committed murder." (Verse 7.) John adds this: "Now Barabbas was a robber." (John 18:40.) Of course the Sanhedrin was the official spokesman for the people. When Pilate asked them, "Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?" "The chief priests stirred up the multitude, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them." So low had these leaders sunk, that they preferred to have Barabbas—insurrectionist, murderer, and robber—turned loose on the people to harass them with his crimes, rather than have Jesus continue his teaching and his miracles of mercy. So warped had they become, that, with them, right was wrong, and wrong was right. Through Isaiah God pronounced woe on such: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; . . . Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!" (Isa. 5:20, 21.) To add to Pilate's perplexity, "while he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him saying, Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." (Matt. 27:19.) But the multitude kept clamoring for the release of Barabbas and the crucifixion of Jesus. When Pilate asked, "Why, what evil hath he done," they merely increased their clamoring for his crucifixion. "So when Pilate saw that he prevailed nothing, but rather that a tumult was arising, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see ye to it." But this empty ceremony did not clear him of guilt, but it brought from the crowd this astonishing outburst from the multitude: "His blood be on us, and on our children." What an imprecation! (Matt. 27:19-26.) "And Pilate, wishing to content the multitude, released unto them Barabbas, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified." Pilate was not free from guilt, but the Jews had the greater guilt. (John 19:11.)

### SOME REFLECTIONS

The leaders of the Jews crucified Jesus through ignorance, but it was inexcusable ignorance. They had every opportunity to know, but they closed their eyes and hardened their hearts against the plainest of evidence. They knew that Jesus opened the eyes of the blind man. (John 9.) They knew that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Instead of believing on this acknowledged evidence that Jesus was the Christ, they took counsel to put Lazarus to death to keep others from seeing him, and thereby be led to believe on Jesus. They all had the same evidence that Nicodemus, one of the rulers, had; and yet early in the ministry of Jesus he had evidence to lead him to say 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.) Later it is said, "Nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees

they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God." (John 12:42, 43.) Men like that would readily join with the other rulers in condemning Jesus to death, so as to maintain their standing with their fellow rulers. Men like that are ready for anything that will enhance their popularity, and are always a danger in any community. And the multitude was being led by them—the blind leading the blind.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Judas Iscariot.  
The Sanhedrin.  
Pilate.  
The multitude.

### QUESTIONS

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

Why did they question Peter, and how did he react?

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
Describe the attitude of the scribes and Pharisees toward Jesus.  
When this passover drew near, what did the people question among themselves?  
What did the chief priests and Pharisees command?  
How did he show them where he was, and with what effect on them?  
What did they decide to do?

#### Verse 72

Discuss verse 72.  
Why the difference in Peter in the garden and in the court of the high priest?

#### Mark 15:12-15

Why did the Sanhedrin hold court the next morning?  
Was the Sanhedrin a court or a mob at that time? Give reason for answer.  
What made the killing of Jesus a national murder?  
Where did the Sanhedrin take Jesus, and why?  
What did Pilate perceive concerning these leaders of the Jews?  
If Jesus had meant to set up a kingdom such as the Jews expected, what would Pilate have had to do?  
What was Pilate's verdict?  
What strange custom did Pilate have?  
Whom did the Jews desire released?  
Tell about this man.  
What shows the depravity of these leaders?  
How did Pilate try to clear himself of guilt?  
Did he succeed?  
Discuss the reflections.

#### Verses 10, 11

Tell about what Judas Iscariot did.

#### Verses 53, 54

Tell how Judas fulfilled his covenant with the chief priests and Pharisees.  
Who seized Jesus, and where did they take him?  
Tell what the disciples did, including Peter and John.

#### Verses 66-71

How came Peter to be in the court of the high priest?  
What had Jesus said to Peter earlier that night, and what did he say?

Lesson XII—March 19, 1944

### JESUS CRUCIFIED

#### Mark 15:22-39

22 And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.

23 And they offered him wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.

24 And they crucify him, and part his garments among them, casting lots upon them, what each should take.

25 And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

26 And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

27 And with him they crucify two robbers; one on his right hand, and one on his left.

29 And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ha! thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days,

30 Save thyself, and come down from the cross.

31 In like manner also the chief priests mocking him among themselves with the scribes said, He saved others; himself he cannot save.

32 Let the Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reproached him.

33 And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

35 And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elijah.

36 And one ran, and filling a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to take him down.

37 And Jesus uttered a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

38 And the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom.

39 And when the centurion, who stood by over against him, saw that he so gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"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." (Isa. 53:5.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Isa. 53:4-12.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

March 13. M

March 14. T

March 15. W

March 16. T

March 17. F

March 18. S

March 19. S

Jesus Crucified (Mark 15:21-23)

Jesus on the Cross (Mark 15:29-39)

Jesus in the Tomb (Mark 15:42-47)

"Christ Died for Us" (Rom. 5:1-8)

The Resurrection of Christ (Mark 16:1-8)

Reconciled Through Christ (2 Cor. 5:14-21)

The Message of the Cross (1 Cor. 1:17-25)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—A.D. 30 or 31—generally understood to be Friday of the week of the crucifixion.

*Place.*—Golgotha, just outside the city of Jerusalem. John identifies the place, as "The place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha." (John 19:17.) We get our word Calvary through the Latin "Calvaria," which means "a bare skull."

*Persons.*—Jesus, some soldiers, a centurion, two thieves, the chief priests, and others.

*Lesson Links.*—To keep order in the far-flung reaches of their empire it was necessary for the Roman government to keep soldiers in various cities and central parts. To keep order among the turbulent Jews it was especially necessary to keep a company of soldiers in Jerusalem and other cities of the Jews. There was always more danger of trouble in Jerusalem when the great throngs of people came up to the feasts. At such times Pilate, or any other who chanced to be governor, came up from Caesarea, accompanied by his bodyguard and additional soldiers. These were referred to by Matthew as "the soldiers of the governor." (Matt. 27:27.) Pilate delivered Jesus to these soldiers, who were experienced in carrying out his orders. These were cruel men, men without any feeling of sympathy or mercy, hardened by their dealings with all sorts of criminals. They took Jesus into the Praetorium and called the whole band together, to make sport of their helpless victim. "And they clothe him with

purple, and plating a crown of thorns, they put it on him; and they began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote his head with a reed, and spat upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him. And when they had mocked him, they took off from him the purple, and put on him his garments." (Verses 16-20.) None of these things was any part of their duty as executioners, but it all showed how cruelly Jesus was treated; but Jesus suffered all these things in silence. "He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." (Isa. 53:7.) "And they lead him out to crucify him."

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### **They Nail Jesus to the Cross (Verses 22-25)**

"They took Jesus therefore: and he went out, bearing the cross for himself, unto the place called The place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha." (John 19:17.) And yet Mark says, "And they compel one passing by, Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to go with them, that he might bear his cross." (Verse 21.) From Matt. 27:32 we learn that they found Simon as they came out of the city. Perhaps what Jesus had experienced had so weakened him that he could not go on carrying the cross alone. Luke 23:26 says they laid the cross on Simon, "to bear it after Jesus." That suggests the possibility that both bore the cross from that point on.

"And they offered him wine mingled with myrrh." This was a stupefying drink, given to those about to be crucified, to lessen the pains of crucifixion. "But he received it not." Matthew says, "When he had tasted it, he would not drink." He would drink to the full the bitter cup of suffering allotted to him. "And they crucify him," nailed him to the cross. Neither of the writers say they nailed him to the cross. The fact is, they might drive nails through the feet and hands, or they might tie the hands and feet to the cross. When some had seen the Lord after his resurrection, and reported the matter, Thomas said, "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." (John 20:24, 25.) No one can imagine the suffering attending the crashing of rough shop-made spikes through hands and feet; and even greater pains, if possible, would come during the long hours of hanging on the cross when much of the weight of the body must be held up by the hands growing more tender and painful from inflammation. It does not seem that sensible men could be so cruel. The victim was nailed to the cross, then the cross was elevated, and let drop into the hole prepared for it. And there was no need for the cross to be as high as represented in pictures, and such was not the case. The soldier could reach the side of the Savior with his spear, and the soldiers could easily break the legs of the victims.

It appears that the garments of the victims belonged to the soldiers that did the crucifying; they divided them among themselves. Four soldiers carried out Pilate's decree. "The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also the coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore one to

another, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be." (John 19:23, 24.) "And it was the third hour, and they crucified him." It was about nine in the morning.

### **The Superscription of His Accusation (Verses 26, 27)**

"And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS." The superscription was placed above the head of the victim, and named the crime for which he was crucified. The Jews did not like that superscription and demanded that Pilate change it. It was humiliating to them to have passers-by read that the Romans had crucified their king. Besides, they knew Pilate meant it for an insult to them, for they well knew that Pilate had no love for them, and that their moblike spirit before his court had exasperated him. Such a superscription would also tend to justify his deed, if his act of crucifying Jesus was called in question by the higher Roman authorities. So when the Jews demanded that he change the superscription, Pilate curtly replied, "What I have written I have written." (See John 19:19-22.) He would have his way about one thing. To add insult and humiliation to their crime of crucifying Jesus, they crucified him between two robbers, very likely those who had been in the band headed by Barabbas.

### **Indignities Heaped Upon Jesus (Verses 29-32)**

It would seem that the sufferings of the victim on the cross would satisfy the most cruel hater of the victim, but not so with reference to Jesus. It seems that the two robbers crucified with Jesus escaped the taunts and jeers of the people; that was all heaped upon Jesus. It seems that Jesus was crucified near a road, for Mark says that "they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ha! thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down from the cross." Could anything be more insulting, and could anything more clearly reveal the character of the people who so acted? Instead of being moved with pity and compassion for one who was meekly and silently enduring such suffering, they were so bereft of the common feelings of humanity that they gloated over his humiliation and suffering. And they were miserably perverting what he said about their destroying "this temple"—his body—and his raising it up again the third day. And it is possible that some of these mockers were among the number who shouted his praises as he entered Jerusalem. And the chief priests, their vengeful spirits not yet satisfied, forgetting the dignity of their position and the sanctity of their high office, came out of the city to mock the Lord in his suffering: "He saved others; himself he cannot save." Yes, he had saved others from many evils, and these chief priests and scribes knew it. He had raised Lazarus from the dead, and they knew that. He had given sight to a man born blind, and they knew that. Within the week, he had healed the blind and the lame in the temple, and they were witnesses to that. And yet they crucified him, and were now trying to insult him with their mockeries. What they did not know was that by his voluntary death he would yet save countless thousands then unborn. "He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." (Isa. 53:3.) But these stubborn chief priests and scribes would not have believed had he come down from the cross. Jesus

had done enough to cause them to believe, had they not been so stubborn and sinful that they were incapable of believing in any one but themselves. Even the crucified robbers reproached him. Luke tells us that one of them rebuked the other, saying, "... for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss." (Luke 23:39-43.) It must be that both reproached him at the start; but one, seeing the demonstrations mentioned in Matt. 27; 45-51, completely changed his attitude.

### **God Showed His Disapproval (Verse 33)**

The way the Jews counted time, the sixth hour would be noon. Jesus had therefore been on the cross three hours, for he was nailed to the cross the third hour. (Verse 25.) Hence at high noon darkness settled down over the whole land and continued for the space of three hours. Matthew mentions other things which showed God's hand in the matter. "The veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake; and the rocks were rent." (Matt. 27:51.) All these things, especially the rending of the veil of the temple from the top to the bottom, and that without the touch of human hands, should have made a profound impression on the priests, but not so. They had gone so far in their evil course that they would even disregard any sign from heaven, as they had disregarded the great miracles Jesus had performed. Their hearts were fully set on doing evil, the while flattering themselves that they were protecting their religion.

### **Jesus Dies (Verses 34-37)**

It is possible that none of the Roman soldiers understood the language Jesus spoke, when he uttered the heart-rending cry, which is here translated, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" At first thought it would seem that the Jews present would have understood him; and yet it is not so strange, if they did not understand him. Under the circumstances it is very likely that he had trouble in uttering words. What he had suffered in his mock trials and on the cross, together with the loss of blood, had certainly greatly weakened all the forces of his body; and the loss of blood and the consequent intense thirst and the fever caused by the inflammation of his wounds would cause his mouth and his throat to be dry. All these things would make it very difficult for anyone to speak distinctly. It must have been a Jew who said, "Behold, he calleth Elijah," for the Roman soldiers likely would not have known anything about Elijah. For that reason it is reasonable to suppose that it was a Jew who gave him a drink of vinegar, and said, "Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to take him down." This vinegar was a sour wine which the soldiers brought along to drink while they were on guard. Jesus uttered a loud voice, and then died. Luke tells us what he said when he uttered the loud voice: "And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, Father, into thy hands I commend m-y spirit." (Luke 23:46.) The multitude who derided him at the beginning of his suffering on the cross had now seen enough to make them apprehensive of what might come. "And all the multitudes that came together to this sight, when they beheld the things that were done returned smiting their breasts." (Luke 23:48.)



### The Centurion Expressed His Thoughts (Verses 38, 39)

Soldiers were left at the place of crucifixion to see that friends of the victims did not come and rescue them from such horrible sufferings and death. It might have been necessary for the centurion to be present with the guards to see to it that friends of the victims did not bribe the soldiers and rescue the victims. Be that as it may, there was a centurion present on this occasion. The darkness, the earthquake, the rending of the rocks,, and the behavior of Jesus through his trials and on the cross so impressed this centurion that he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God." Matt. 27:54 has this, "Now the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, when they saw the earthquake, and the things that were done, feared exceedingly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God." The demonstrations that occurred while Jesus was on the cross, together with his behavior in his mock trials and on the cross, may have contributed greatly to the results of the preaching on the following Pentecost.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

When the sufferings of Jesus were about ended, he said, "It is finished." (John 19:30.) His sufferings were over; he had given his life for sinners; he died that we might live. From the time he was seized in the Garden of Gethsemane he was passive; he was in the hands of his enemies; he had ended his active ministry. In reality his active ministry ended with his closing speech and prayer; these are recorded in John, chapters 14 to 17. In that prayer Jesus said, "I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do." (John 17:4.) With this statement before him it is hard to see how anyone can contend that Jesus failed to accomplish the main work he came to do, that is, the establishment of a world kingdom with his throne in Jerusalem.

By his death Christ Jesus purchased redemption for us; he gave his life for us that we might live unto him. He is therefore both the redeemer and the ransom he gave himself a ransom for all. (1 Tim. 2:6.) Herein is our only hope; and yet if we refuse to accept the deliverance purchased for us, we remain servants of sin. Freedom of choice is ours; it is ours to choose whom we will serve, "Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness." (Rom. 6:16-18.)

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Matt. 20:28.  
Rom. 3:23-26.  
Eph. 2:13-18.  
Gal. 2:19, 20.

### QUESTIONS

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

Why was Pilate and his soldiers in Jerusalem at the time of our lesson?

How did the soldiers treat Jesus before crucifying him?

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

**Verses 22-25**

Tell about Jesus, and then Simon, bearing the cross.  
 Why offer Jesus wine mingled with myrrh?  
 Prove that Jesus was nailed to the cross.  
 Tell how the soldiers disposed of his garments.

**Verses 26, 27**

Tell about the superscription and what the Jews and Pilate said about it.

**Verses 29-32**

Tell about the conduct of the people and the chief priests while Jesus suffered on the cross.

Tell about the robbers who were also crucified.

**Verse 33**

At what hour was Jesus crucified, and when darkness came, and how long?  
 What other great demonstrations were there?

**Verses 34-37**

Why did some think Jesus called Elijah?  
 Discuss this incident.  
 What did Jesus say just before he expired?

**Verses 38, 39**

What so impressed the centurion, and what did he say?  
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XIII—March 26, 1944

**JESUS IN THE TOMB**

Mark 15:40-47

40 And there were also women beholding from afar: among whom were both Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome;

41 Who, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him; and many-other women that came up with him unto Jerusalem.

42 And when even was now come, because it was the Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath,

43 There came Joseph of Arimathaea, a councillor of honorable estate, who also himself was looking for the kingdom of God; and he boldly went in unto Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus.

44 And Pilate marveled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.

45 And when he learned it of the centurion, he granted the corpse to Joseph.

46 And he bought a linen cloth, and taking him down, wound him in the linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of a rock; and he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.

47 And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"And he took it down, and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb that was hewn in stone, where never man had yet lain." (Luke 23:53.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Isa. 53:7-9.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

March 20. M

March 21. T

March 22. W

March 23. T

March 24. F

March 25. S

March 26. S

Jesus a High Priest (Heb. 3:1-6)

Christ as a Prophet (Matt. 21:4-11)

Jesus as King (Matt. 27:11-15)

Christ the Head of the Church (Eph. 5:22-27)

Christ the Savior of the World (Matt. 1:21-25)

Christ Our Example (1 Pet. 2:21-25)

Christ the Great Teacher (Mark 1:21-28)

**LESSON SETTINGS**

*Time.*—A.D. 30 or 31.

*Place.*—Outside Jerusalem.

*Persons.*—Many women disciples, Joseph of Arimathaea, and Pilate.

*Lesson Links.*—The death, the burial, and the resurrection of Christ

Jesus, and what it all means to a sin-cursed world, fill us with wonder. Back of it all is the love and mercy of God. That Jesus was buried is a part of the gospel. "Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures." (1 Cor. 15:1-4.)

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### **The Women Disciples Who Ministered to Jesus (Verses 40, 41)**

The miraculous demonstrations while Jesus was on the cross so impressed the centurion who had charge of the crucifixion that he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God." (Verse 39.) Mary, the mother of Jesus, was near the cross while Jesus was suffering the agonies of the crucifixion; she is not therefore named among the women that stood afar off, as they watched the proceedings. "And there were also women beholding from afar: among whom were both Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; who, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him; and many other women that came up with him unto Jerusalem." In a list of names the most prominent was mentioned first. The fact that Jesus had cast seven demons out of Mary Magdalene argues nothing against her character. She first appears with many other women in Luke 8:1-3. She and these other women must have been women of means, for they ministered to Jesus and the twelve of their substance. They contributed to the support of Jesus and the apostles, and it seems that Mary Magdalene was the leader in the matter. "In reality, all of the indications of her character and position which are furnished by the scriptures point to a woman in easy circumstances, with a benevolent disposition, tender sensibilities, and commanding influence. Her name stands first among the female attendants of Jesus at almost every mention of it, and on her he conferred the peculiar honor of making her the first woman witness of his resurrection from the dead. It is a shame on the Christian world that a woman of virtue so preeminent has come to be commonly regarded as a reformed harlot; and that her cognomen which served only to distinguish her from other Maws by indicating her birthplace, has become, in the contracted form of Magdalene, the name of societies and institutions for the reformation of abandoned women. This is an illustration, however, of the corrupting and degrading tendency of human tradition when it dares to tamper with the sacred narratives. It is Rome that has given Mary the false and low repute in which she is erroneously held."—McGarvey. All the women mentioned were devoted followers of Jesus.

### **Joseph of Arimathaea Asked for the Body of Jesus (Verses 42, 43)**

In his "Interwoven Gospels" William Pittenger has woven together in the following order what the four writers say about Joseph of

Arimathaea and his asking Pilate for the body of Jesus: "And when even was now come, because it was the Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, there came a rich man, Joseph of Arimathaea, a councillor of honorable estate, who also himself was Jesus' disciple, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, [and] was looking for the kingdom of God; he had not consented unto their counsel and deed; and he boldly went in unto Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus." And herein we have a singular thing. He who, though he had been a disciple of Jesus, but was afraid to confess it, now, that Jesus is dead, goes boldly into the presence of Pilate, and asks for the body of Jesus. Perhaps the apostles made no move in the matter for the reason that they had no place to bury the body. Joseph did not want the body thrown into a common grave with the two thieves. It was the even of Friday, the day before the Sabbath. Joseph was a councilor, that is, a member of the Sanhedrin; but he had no part in the mock trial that condemned Jesus. He was also a rich man. He was looking for the kingdom of God. As a disciple of Jesus, he had expected Jesus to set up his kingdom, though it is not likely that he had any clearer ideas as to the nature of the kingdom than did the others. But he was "a good and righteous man." (Luke 23:50.) This man was of Arimathaea, which Luke identifies as a city of the Jews. Some have thought that Arimathaea was the ancient city of Ramah, the home of Samuel; but that is mostly conjecture. Most likely he had a home in Jerusalem; he must have owned the garden in which he had prepared his own tomb.

#### **Pilate "Granted the Corpse to Joseph" (Verses 44, 45)**

"And Pilate marveled if he were already dead." It is said that the victim sometimes remained alive on the cross two or three days. Now this man Joseph asks for the body of Jesus but a few hours after he was nailed to the cross. Pilate must have known that Joseph was a man of integrity and honor; otherwise he would have given him no consideration, supposing that it was a scheme to rescue Jesus from the cross. The centurion who had charge of the crucifixion had returned to army headquarters, leaving the soldiers to guard the victims on the cross. Pilate was cautious; he sent for the centurion to learn if Jesus were already dead. Being assured by the centurion that Jesus was dead, "he granted the corpse to Joseph." The thoughtful reader will notice that even the enemies of Jesus made it certain that Jesus died on the cross, and was not rescued alive. Had it not been for this official guaranty of his death, enemies might have claimed that he was removed from the cross alive, and afterwards exhibited as having arisen from the dead. Pilate's action made that claim impossible. If he were afterwards seen alive, then he must have arisen from the dead. And so God uses even sinners to establish his truth; even official Rome contributed its part in establishing the truth of the resurrection.

#### **The Body of Jesus Buried (Verses 46, 47)**

Joseph went to the expense of buying a piece of linen cloth for a shroud for the body of Jesus. Of course, he would not alone attempt to take the body from the cross and bury it. A man of his station at that time would have a body of servants; he would superintend the operations. "And there came also Nicodemus, he who at the

first came to him by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. So they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb wherein was never man yet laid. There then because of the Jews' Preparation (for the tomb was nigh at hand) they laid Jesus." (John 19:39-42.) These men had been so quiet about their attitude toward Jesus that one wonders if either of them before this moment knew that the other was friendly to Jesus. It is singular that these men, these high Jewish officials, should now boldly show their friendship to Jesus, after remaining so quiet during all the proceedings against Jesus. However, on one occasion, when the high court of the Jews was planning to kill Jesus, "Nicodemus saith unto them (he that came to him before, being one of them), Doth our law judge a man, except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth?" But this effort to remind them of what was just under the law was met by this contemptuous reply, "Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." (John 7:50-52.) The Sanhedrin had turned itself into a mob determined on the death of Jesus, and both Joseph and Nicodemus knew that a Jewish mob was incapable of reasoning about anything. Nothing that they could say would have any influence. If they could not influence the court against their unrighteous procedure, they could now give the body of Jesus a decent burial. "And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid." "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.) Incidentally this shows that the burial took place on Friday evening. This should settle the day of the crucifixion—the day before the Sabbath.

When we consider how God uses his enemies in carrying out his plans, we are struck with amazement. None of them knows that he is being used. When the Jews became so corrupt that Jehovah could bear with them no longer, he said, "Ho Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, the staff in whose hand is mine indignation! I will send him against a profane nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy, and to cut off nations not a few." (Read Isa. 10:5-19.) Nebuchadnezzar would have no idea that he was doing the work of Jehovah, that Jehovah was using him as a man would use an axe. Now in the burial of Jesus the bitterest enemies of Jesus contribute their part to prove that no one could steal away the body of Jesus, so as to make it appear that he had arisen from the dead. "Now on the morrow, which is the day after the Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees were gathered together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said while he was yet alive, After three days I will 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. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a guard: go, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and

made the sepulcher sure, sealing the stone, the guard being with them." (Matt. 27:62-66.) A stone had been placed at the entrance to the tomb; now the governor's seal was so placed on it that it could not be moved without breaking the seal, and soldiers were left to guard the tomb against possible theft of the body. So these bitterest enemies made it impossible for the dead body of Jesus to be taken away. Such facts as these hear repeating. If it be said by infidels that Matthew was not telling the truth about this transaction, let him remember that Matthew wrote while many of these men lived. Had he made a false statement, these enemies would have eagerly seized on that false report, and thereby discredited all that Matthew had said. Any fair-minded man knows this to be true. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee." (Psalm 76:10.) God therefore overrules the wicked purposes and deeds of wicked men to make them contribute to the carrying out of his own purposes.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

The disciples were so filled with the Jewish notion that the Messiah would not die, but abide forever, that the repeated statement of Jesus that he would be killed and rise again seemingly had no effect on their notion of things. Apparently their hopes were buried with his body. The two disciples on their way to Emmaus remarked sadly, "But we hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel." (Luke 24:21.) His enemies were more alive to what he had said about rising again than were his apostles. A well-rooted notion, a notion that exactly suits one's feelings and earnest desires, is hard to overcome.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Ancient burial places.  
How long did Jesus remain in the tomb?  
Buried with Christ.  
When will death be destroyed?

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
Quote and comment on 1 Cor. 15:1-4.

#### Verses 40, 41

Name some of the women who watched the crucifixion.  
Does demon-possession indicate a depraved character?

#### Verses 42, 43

Tell about Joseph of Arimathaea and his boldness.

#### Verses 44, 45

On what grounds did Pilate grant to Joseph the body of Jesus?

#### Verses 46, 47

Tell about the burial of the body of Jesus.  
Discuss the reflections.

**MAP LINK**

**CLICK ICON FOR MAP**



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**SECOND QUARTER****LIFE AND LETTERS OF PAUL**

*AIM:—To learn the secret of Paul's greatness as a Christian and, from his life and letters, to find inspiration and guidance for our own lives.*

Lesson I—April 2, 1944

**SAUL BECOMES A NEW MAN**

Acts 9:1-9, 13-19a

1 But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

2 And asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

3 And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven:

4 And he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest:

6 But rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

7 And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man.

8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

9 And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink.

13 But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how much evil he did to thy saints at Jerusalem:

14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name.

15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel:

16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake.

17 And Ananias departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

18 And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized;

19 And he took food and was strengthened.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature." (2 Cor. 5:17.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—1 Tim. 1:12-17.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

March 27. M

March 28. T

March 29. W

March 30. T

March 31. F

April 1. S

April 2. S

The Conversion of Saul (Acts 9:1-9)

A Chosen Vessel (Acts 9:13-19)

A Jailer Converted (Acts 16:25-34)

A New Birth (John 3: 1-8)

A New Creation (2 Cor. 5:14-19)

A New Life (Col. 3: 1-11)

The Blessedness of Forgiveness (Psalm 32: t-5)



**LESSON SETTINGS**

*Time.*—Various dates are assigned, ranging from A.D. 33 to 37, or even later.

*Places.*—Paul was in Jerusalem when he secured from the high priest the letters of authority for his mission of persecution; he was on the highway near Damascus when he was arrested by the light from heaven, and he was in Damascus when Ananias told him what to do to be saved.

*Persons.*—Saul, the high priest, the Lord, Ananias, and certain men who accompanied Saul.

*Lesson Links.*—Saul of Tarsus, the persecutor of Christians, later became Paul the apostle. He was a man of great energy and determination. Tarsus was in Cilicia. There was a sufficient number of Jews from Cilicia to have a synagogue in Jerusalem. Saul would be a member of that synagogue; a man of his learning, energy, fidelity to all things Jewish, could not have been kept out of that debate with Stephen. (Acts 6:8-10.) But he and the others got the worst of the argument, and that infuriated them. They took Stephen before the council, and made many false charges against him; but the thing that converted that court into a raging mob was the speech Stephen made to the council. "And they east him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul." (Acts 7:58.) This is the first time the name of Saul of Tarsus occurs. "And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem." (Acts 8:1.) Saul became the leader in this bloody affair. Many years later, while he was a prisoner of Rome in Caesarea, Paul said to Agrippa, "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And this I also did in Jerusalem: and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death I gave my vote against them. And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities." (Acts 26:9-11.) Then Paul tells of his journey to Damascus, and what he saw, and what the Lord said to him. The student should not fail to read this speech Paul made to Agrippa, and also the speech Paul made to the Jews in Jerusalem. (Acts 22:1-21.)

**COMMENTS ON THE LESSON****Saul's Commission from the High Priest (Verses 1, 2)**

Saul was exceedingly mad against the saints. Certain devout men —men who were not disciples of Christ, but who were not in sympathy with this rage against Stephen buried Stephen. "But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison." (Acts 8:2, 3.) Some months later he was still "breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." This is expressive of furious rage against helpless men and women, for in his rage he did not spare the women. He did not succeed in seizing all the disciples in Jerusalem, but all that escaped his fury were scattered abroad. Some even went to foreign cities, such as Damascus and Antioch in Syria. He had

now it seems from his speech to Agrippa been for some time following up these scattered disciples, even unto foreign cities. It seems therefore that the Roman government gave the Jewish authorities power over Jews no matter where they went. Having secured letters of authority from the high priest, he collected some men to accompany him, and started to Damascus, "that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem." He was to bring these disciples to Jerusalem to be punished. (Acts 22:5.) Saul's name struck terror to the hearts of the disciples, for it seems that no other man was so fierce in persecuting the saints. He was an outstanding character in whatever he did. Of himself he says, "For ye have heard of my manner of life in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and made havoc of it: and I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers." (Gal. 1:13, 14.)

### **Jesus Appears to Saul on the Way (Verses 3-7)**

When Saul and his company started out on this one hundred and forty-mile journey to Damascus, he had no idea that his whole course of life would be changed before he saw Jerusalem again. They must have been on the road almost a week, but he was not to enter Damascus in the manner he had in mind; neither would he carry out the purpose of his long journey: for as he drew night unto Damascus, "suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven." It was noon (Acts 22:6), and the light was "above the brightness of the sun" (Acts 26:13). It is a blinding light that shines above the brightness of the noonday sun. Saul "could not see for the glory of that light." (Acts 22:11.) It blinded him. But Saul saw the Lord before blindness came upon him. (Acts 22:14, 15; 1 Cor. 15:8; 9:1.) Saul knew he was in the presence of a heavenly being, but knew not who it was—he did not know even after the Lord said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He saw the Lord and heard him speak, but did not know that it was Jesus of Nazareth; for he immediately said, "Who art thou, Lord?" The Lord replied, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." He was persecuting Jesus by persecuting his disciples. (Matt. 25:31-46.) He had nothing against the disciples of a personal nature; he was exceedingly mad against them because they preached Jesus as the Christ. He was trying to stop that sort of preaching. Seeing Jesus did not produce faith in him; it took words to produce faith. When this glorious being whom he saw said, "I am Jesus," he believed that, and said, "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts 22:10.) And so his faith came by hearing, as does the faith of anyone else. No inspired man ever gave a hint that faith ever comes in any other way than by evidence. "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." (Rom. 10:17.) When Saul showed evidence of faith by calling Jesus Lord, Jesus immediately said, "Rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Notice that word "must." There are some things that a sinner "must do." No one should allow himself to be deceived on this point.

"And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man." And yet Paul later said, "And they that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they heard not

the voice of him that spake to me." To hear is something used in the sense of to understand, and it is sometimes used in the sense of to give heed. And it sometimes happens that a person hears another's voice, but does not hear his words. On one occasion when God spoke to Jesus the people thought it had thundered. (John 12:28, 29.) These people heard, and yet they did not hear; that is, they heard the sound of the voice, but did not hear the words. And so with the men that were with Saul.

### **Saul Is Led into Damascus (Verses 8, 9)**

When Saul arose he saw no man, for he had been blinded by the glory of the light. Then men that were with Saul led him by the hand into Damascus. He himself said, "And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me I came into Damascus." (Acts 22:11.) One thing stands out plainly in this matter; namely, the Lord did not tell Saul on the highway what to do to be saved, but sent him into Damascus to find out; and Saul had to depend on the men that were with him to lead him into Damascus, men who, like himself, were unsaved. At first thought it would seem strange that the Lord would leave Saul in suspense for three days. It was three days of agony for Saul, so much so that he neither ate nor drank anything; but Saul needed that experience, else the Lord would not have subjected him to it. It gave him time to ponder the enormity of his guilt. He had been a party to the stoning of Stephen. He had striven to make the saints blaspheme the name of Christ; failing in this, he had cast many into prison and voted for their death. (Acts 26:9-11.) Consciousness of his guilt would be like a dagger in his heart. This awful weight of guilt—when and how would he ever find relief? In these three days he had time to become, for the first time, thoroughly acquainted with himself.

### **Ananias Sent to Saul (Verses 13-16)**

In another part of the city was a humble disciple of the Lord, whose name was Ananias. He had heard of Saul, and it seems that he had heard of his mission to Damascus. Hence when the Lord told him to go to Saul and gave him directions how to find him, Ananias was afraid to go, even after the Lord said to him, "Behold, he prayeth; and he hath seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight." But Ananias' fear of Saul was about to be greater than his confidence in the Lord. Saul was a chosen vessel—chosen by the Lord for a special purpose—"to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel." Later Paul gave the specific purpose of the Lord in appearing to him in person. (Acts 26:16-18.) He had caused many people to suffer much for the name of the Lord; now he in turn must suffer many things for that name.

### **Saul Receives His Sight and Is Baptized (Verses 17-19a)**

There was nothing as yet for Saul to do but to wait and ponder. Jesus did not tell him what to do to be saved, for he had committed that work into the hands of his messengers. After the Lord's inspired ambassadors began their work on Pentecost, the Lord has never in person told anyone what to do to be saved. Blinded Saul had to make his way into Damascus the best way he could, where it

would be told him what he "must do." Now the Lord is sending a messenger to him to open his eyes and tell him what he must do. Ananias came to Saul and said to him, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit." That Ananias could restore sight to Saul by laying on his hands shows that he had been endowed with miraculous powers; he perhaps also had power to confer spiritual gifts. The important thing to Saul was the results of the visit of Ananias. It is certain that in all the past days of his manhood he had not felt so helpless as he felt during the three days of sightless waiting. The proud and self-sufficient Saul had to be led by his inferiors into the city where he had to wait helplessly three days for relief from one whom he had considered worthy only of death. And this experience, too, was good for Saul. But the words of Ananias gave him a new outlook on life. "Brother Saul" would now use his great powers to build up that which he had vainly tried to destroy. He could not be a witness without seeing the Lord; but his testimony would amount to nothing, unless he obeyed the Lord. Ananias was sent to him, not only to tell him what he was chosen to be and what he would suffer, but also to tell him what he "must do" to be saved. So Ananias also said to Saul, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name." (Acts 22:16.) This is in complete harmony with what Jesus said in the Great Commission: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16.) And both scriptures are in agreement with what Peter said to inquiring sinners in the first sermon preached under the Great Commission: "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.) And God is no respecter of persons; what one must do, all must do. The plan of salvation is the same to all, and is clearly set forth in the passages quoted. But some people' get confused in trying to make the circumstances connected with some conversions a part of law of pardon. But we should realize that the carrying out of any command is essential, but the circumstances attending every case of obedience may be as different as can well be. We will not see clearly until we realize this. Saul saw a great light; if this were an essential part of conversion, then everyone would have to see a light brighter than the noonday sun, and be made blind by it. But Saul had to believe on the Lord, repent of his sins, and be baptized, just as do all others.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Perhaps no one ever made a greater change nor gave up more to become a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ than did Saul of Tarsus. He stood high in his nation; the leading men were his associates and supporters. He knew that all these former friends—every one of them—would immediately become his enemies. To them he would be a renegade, a traitor, an outcast. And it seems that he also lost his property. "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, and be found in him, not having a righteous-

ness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead." (Phil. 3:7-11. ) Paul felt that his loss was as nothing compared with what he gained. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward." (Rom. 8:18.)

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Saul the persecutor.  
How his faith came.  
The penitent Saul.  
What Saul had to do to be saved.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give, time, places, and persons.  
Let the class discuss the incidents in the life of Saul as a persecutor.

#### Verses 1, 2

Discuss verses 1, 2.

#### Verses 3-7

How far is Damascus from Jerusalem?  
What experience did Saul have as he neared Damascus?  
Why was Saul persecuting the disciples?  
How came Saul to believe on Jesus as Lord?  
Explain how the men with Saul heard and yet did not hear.

#### Verses 8, 9

Why did Saul go on into Damascus, and how did he find the way?  
What is said of him for the next three days?

#### Verses 13-16

Tell about Ananias and his conversation with the Lord.  
Why had the Lord appeared to Saul?

#### Verses 17-19a

What benefit would Saul receive during his days of blindness and waiting?  
Why had not the Lord told him what to do to be saved?  
What did Ananias say to Saul?  
Tell what all sinners must do to be saved.  
Discuss the difference between obedience and circumstances.  
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson II—April 9, 1944

### CHRIST'S VICTORY OVER DEATH

1 Cor. 15:41-58

41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory.

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

43 It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

45 So also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

46 Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual.

47 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven.

48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

55 O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?

56 The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law:

57 But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15:57.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Psalm 73:23-28.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

April 3. M	The Glory of the Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:41-49)
April 4. T	The Triumph of the Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:50-58)
April 5. W	Eternal Life with God (2 Cor. 5:1-10)
April 6. T	The Mind of the Spirit (Rom. 8:1-11)
April 7. F	Alive from the Dead (Rom. 6:12-23)
April 8. S	No More Death (Rev. 21:1-5)
April 9. S	Precious Death (Psalm 116:12-19)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—A.D. 57 or 58.

*Place.*—First Corinthians was written at Ephesus.

*Persons.*—Paul and the saints at Corinth.

*Lesson Links.*—There are some things that human beings cannot find out for themselves. In all matters pertaining to our origin, duty, and destiny we must depend on revelation. No man could have known anything about the resurrection had there never been anything revealed concerning it. When life after death was first revealed to man we cannot know, but it seems that the pious of all ages believed in a future life. Abraham "looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. 11:10.) The Old Testament worthies recognized that in this world they were strangers and pilgrims—they were looking for a country of their own, a heavenly country. (Heb. 11:13-16.) Job firmly believed in a life after his body perished. When Job repeated the age-old question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" he was not expressing any doubt on his part, for he answers the question in the verses containing the question. (Job 14:13-15.) Again Job speaks very emphatically: "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.)

But the foregoing passages speak of life after death rather than a resurrection from the dead. On this point Daniel speaks more

plainly. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." (Dan. 12:2.) But all matters that pertain to the resurrection are revealed more fully in the New Testament. But the Pharisees, not accepting the gospel teaching at all, believed there would be a resurrection of the dead. (Acts 23:8.) Jesus leaves no doubt as to the universality of the resurrection. "... the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." (John 5:28, 29.) All shall be raised, both the righteous and the unrighteous. In his writings Paul speaks mostly and more particularly of the resurrection of the righteous, but he taught emphatically that the unjust would also be raised. When the Jews came down from Jerusalem to Caesarea and laid many charges against Paul before Felix the governor, Paul denied that they could prove any of their charges, and then said, "But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets; having hope toward God, which these also themselves look for, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust." (Acts 24:14, 15.) A resurrection to condemnation will not be much of a resurrection; there is a better resurrection than that. (Heb. 11:35.) That is the resurrection to which Paul was seeking to attain. (Phil. 3:11.)

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### **A Natural Body—A Spiritual Body (Verses 41-44)**

It seems that none of the Greek philosophers believed there would be a resurrection from the dead; yet some did believe that the soul, or spirit, continued to live after the death of the body. Some of these had carried the idea of no resurrection into the church at Corinth. To confute that idea Paul first proved that Christ was raised from the dead (verses 1-11). When Paul had preached the resurrection of Christ, they believed it. "Now if Christ is preached that he hath been raised from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" (Verse 12.) "For if the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised: and if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." (Verses 16, 17.) "But some one will say, How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come?" (Verse 35.)

We have such limited ability to understand anything outside our own experiences and observations, it is not likely that these questions could be answered in such way as to enable us to have a clear conception of all things pertaining to the resurrection. But Paul shows that no one should think it impossible for God to make the resurrection body differ from the body that died; for God made all sorts of bodies and these bodies differ greatly. "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another." (Verse 40.) It seems that these celestial bodies are angels, and not the planets and suns; for he speaks of these in verse 41.

The sun, moon, and stars differ in glory. Even stars differ in glory—some are brighter than others. It seems that Paul mentions

this limitless variation in the things God had made to show that God is able to make the resurrection bodies to differ from the natural body, with each body differing from the other, and each one having its own personality.

In speaking of death as the sowing of the body, Paul is adapting his language to his illustration about sowing grain. (Verses 36-38.) In death there is corruption—the body decays; and there is a certain dishonor in death, for death is the result of sin. The natural body is the body we now have; the spiritual body is the body of the resurrection.

### **Natural First, Then Spiritual (Verses 45-48)**

Adam was the first man in point of time! he was also first in the sense that was the head of a new creation. The first Adam was a living soul. In the sentence, "The last Adam became a life-giving spirit," the word "became" is printed in italics, which means that it was not in what Paul said, but was supplied by the translators—supplied by them to make it correspond in construction with the previous sentence.

But did Christ become a life-giving spirit? He was in the beginning with God, and all things were made by him. (John 1:4, 10; Gal. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:1, 10, 11.) Adam had life; Christ gave life, even from the beginning of all life on the earth. Adam was of the earth, Christ is from heaven. As Adam was of the earth, earthy, so are all descendants; "We shall also bear the image of the heavenly." "For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory." (Phil. 3:20, 21.) "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is." (1 John 3:2.)

### **The Living Shall Be Changed (Verses 50-53)**

"Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." The connection here shows that Paul is here-speaking of what Peter calls "the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 1:11.) By the term "flesh and blood" he refers to our bodies as now constituted. Our bodies as now constituted will not enter the celestial home. "Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." The incorruption of our future existence will not be an inheritance from our present bodies, nor will these bodies grow into a state of incorruption. The dead saints will be raised up with incorruptible bodies, immortal bodies, bodies not subjected to injury, sickness, or death. The bodies of those alive when the Lord comes will be changed.

Up to this point Paul had said nothing to these saints at Corinth as to what would be done about the living saints when the dead were raised. Since he had told them that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, it would naturally cause them to wonder as to what would be the fate of the living when the dead were raised up with glorified bodies. Paul proceeds to clear up that matter. "Behold, I tell you a mystery." A mystery may be a thing that had not been revealed, or something not understood. Anything is a



mystery to a person who does not understand it. Barnes gets his chronology mixed up, and supposes that nothing had ever been revealed about what status the living would have at the resurrection; but First Thessalonians was written some years before First Corinthians was written, in that letter Paul said that the dead in Christ would rise before anything was done about the living; "then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess. 4:16, 17.) But this passage says nothing about what change will take place in the bodies of either the living or the dead. And it is possible that the Corinthian saints had not a copy of First Thessalonians. Anyway, Paul gives this additional information: "We all shall not sleep," that is, we will not all have to die in order to gain an immortal body—"but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." The bodies of the living will be made immortal. And this change will be instantaneous—from a mortal body to an immortal body in a moment. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

### **Death Swallowed Up in Victory (Verses 54-57)**

When both the living saints and the dead saints put on immortality, that will be the victory for which we strive and for which we hope, a victory over corruption, death, and the grave—a victory that will never be turned into defeat. It is then that "death is swallowed up in victory." Here Paul adopts a quotation from Hosea 13:14: "O death, where are thy plagues?" Paul then adds, "The sting of death is sin." So many have mistaken Paul's meaning, and have made it appear that sin is the sting that accompanies death, and that the righteous die peacefully and quietly like falling asleep. But who has not seen the righteous, even innocent infants, suffer agonies in their passing? Sin is the sting that causes death. When Adam sinned, then the sentence of death came upon all men. Had there been no sin, there would have been no death; but as it is, death gains the victory for a time. But death's victory is turned into defeat by the resurrection. Death will have no more dominion over the risen saints. "The power of sin is the law." That is, when we sin, the law condemns us to death—sin then has dominion over us. But Christ redeemed us from the law and will redeem us from death. "But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

An Exhortation (Verse 58)

"If Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain." But Christ has been raised, and his resurrection assures our resurrection. Hence in our faith we must be steadfast, unmovable. Too many people are carried about by every wind of doctrine like dry leaves before the wind, unstable in all their ways. "Always abounding"—in what? Many people are always abounding in things hurtful to themselves and others. And some flatter themselves that they are abounding in what is called the work of the church, and the more they work the more harm they do. "Always abounding in the work of the Lord." The work of the Lord is the work the Lord appoints for us to do. That sort of work is not in

vain. Any other sort of pretended work of the Lord is vain, empty of any benefit to ourselves or others.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

"The last enemy that shall be abolished is death." Christ our King is now leading his hosts in a warfare against all enemies of man. The last enemy to be destroyed is death; that enemy will be destroyed when all people are raised from the power of death. He must reign until this is accomplished. "Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power." (Verses 24-26.) "And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all." (Verse 28.)

We know little of the glories of the life beyond the resurrection; but we have the definite promise of Jesus, that we will be with him, and that will be glorious beyond expression. (John 14:1-3.) It will be an eternal life of "glory and honor and incorruption. (Rom. 2:7.) That should encourage any one to "patience in well-doing." With these prospects laid out before us, and in view of the fact that we must leave this life, it is strange that so many live as if they expected to live here through all eternity.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The Old Testament teaching on the future life. John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15. 1 Thess. 4:13-18. 1 John 3:2.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
Give the Old Testament teaching on life after death, and also the resurrection.  
What does Jesus say about the resurrection?

#### Verses 41-44

Read and discuss these verses.

#### Verses 45-49

Read and discuss these verses.

#### Verses 50-53

What is said about flesh and blood, and also corruption?  
Read and discuss these verses.

#### Verses 54-57

What is the victory Paul mentions?  
What was the mystery he mentions?  
When does death cease to be the victor?

#### Verse 58

Discuss verse 58.  
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson III—April 16, 1944

### SAUL'S EARLY PREACHING

Acts 9:19b-30; 11:25, 26

19 And he was certain days with the disciples that were at Damascus.

20 And straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus, that he is the Son of God.

21 And all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that in Jerusalem made havoc of them that called on this name? and he had come hither for this intent, that he might bring them bound before the chief priests.

22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews that dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Christ.

23 And when many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel together to kill him:  
 24 But their plot became known to Saul And they watched the gates also day and night that they might kill him:  
 25 But his disciples took him by night, and let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket.  
 26 And when he was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.  
 27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus.  
 28 And he was with them going in and going out at Jerusalem,  
 29 Preaching boldly in the name of the Lord: and he spake and disputed against the Grecian Jews; but they were seeking to kill him.  
 30 And when the brethren knew it, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

25 And he went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul;  
 26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the church, and taught much people; and that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." (Rom. 1:16.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—1 Tim. 6:11-16.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

April 10.	M	Preaching with Power (Acts 9:19b-30)
April 11.	T	Lives Transformed (Acts 11:25-30)
April 12.	W	Jesus Begins His Ministry (Matt. 4:12-17)
April 13.	T	The Importance of Preaching (Rom. 10:4-15)
April 14.	F	The Substance of Preaching (1 Cor. 1:18-25)
April 15.	S	The Gospel of Christ (Gal. 1:11-17)
April 16.	S	The Cleansing Word (Psalm 119:9-16)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—For Acts 9:19b-21, the dates range from A.D. 33 to 38; for Acts 9:22-30, three years later; for Acts 11:25, 26, probably A.D. 42 or A.D. 44, according to some authorities.

*Places.*—Damascus, Jerusalem, and Antioch in Syria.

*Persons.*—Saul, the Jews and the disciples in Damascus, Barnabas and the disciples at Antioch.

*Lesson Links.*—The printed text of this lesson follows immediately after the printed text of Lesson I. Though Saul completely reversed his course of life, he did not banish from his memory how he made havoc of the church in his mad career as a leading persecutor of the saints; but that God forgave him and made him an apostle was a constant reminder to him of the greatness of God's mercy and grace. When he mentioned these matters, he did so that others might be led to put their trust in the mercy and grace of God. And when he thought of what he had done it made him feel little. "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not found vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." (1 Cor. 15:9, 10.) "I thank him that enabled me, even Christ Jesus our Lord, for that he counted me faithful, appointing me to his service; though I was

before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: howbeit I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief: howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me as chief might Jesus Christ show forth all his longsuffering, for an ensample of them that should thereafter believe on him unto eternal life." (1 Tim. 1:12-16.) "For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard of my manner of life in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and made havoc of it: and I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles; straightway I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me: but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned unto Damascus." (Gal. 1:11-17.) The last two quotations are lengthy; but if the student will keep the facts revealed in all the quotations in mind, he will have a good background for the study of the "Life and Letters of Paul."

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### **Saul Begins to Preach the Gospel (Verses 19b-21)**

"And he was certain days with the disciples." Such an expression indicates a short period of time. Of course Ananias had to vouch for Saul, otherwise the disciples would have been afraid of him, as was Ananias until the Lord overcame his fear. These "certain days" were spent in social talks with the disciples. It must have been a source of supreme satisfaction and joy to them to learn that their greatest enemy had now become a humble disciple, a brother whom they could love and trust. But Luke makes no glowing report of Saul's conversion and his subsequent actions; he merely tells in simple language what occurred. When the Sabbath came around Saul went into the synagogue. It is not likely that the Jews of that synagogue had heard of Saul's great change, and so he was invited to speak to the attendants. But it was not the persecuting Saul that spoke in the synagogue at Damascus on that Sabbath day; that Saul had died as effectually as if life had actually departed from his physical body. "For I through the law died unto the law, that I might live unto God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me." (Gal. 2:19, 20.) Yes, the persecuting Saul was dead, and a devoted and faithful disciple of the Lord had been raised up. It is not surprising that the attendants at the synagogue services that day were amazed at what they saw and heard. "And all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that in Jerusalem made havoc of them that called on

this name? and he had come hither for this intent, that he might bring them bound before the chief priests." It seems to have been between these incidents and those mentioned in verse 22 that Saul made his journey into Arabia. (Gal. 1:15-17.)

### **Saul Escapes a Plot to Kill Him (Verses 22-25)**

We are not told why Saul went away into Arabia, nor what he did while in that region of country; but his dropping out of sight for a time would give the Jews time to cool off somewhat from their excitement and anger at his turning to Christ. Besides, for his own sake he needed to get away from turmoil and strife for a season; he needed time for quiet meditation and prayer so as to be able to adjust himself thoroughly to this new life. In this experience Saul gained strength. "But Saul increased the more in strength." Although Saul was inspired, the Holy Spirit did not by direct impact develop his character; he had to grow and develop as do all other Christians. He tells us himself that he did not learn the gospel from others, but that it came to him by revelation. (Gal. 1:11, 12.) Even so, he had to believe and practice what he preached the same as those to whom he preached; he received no more development of character from his inspiration than did those who put into practice what he preached. Saul had so increased in strength that he confounded the Jews—put them to shame. When he first preached to them that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, he amazed them; now he confounded them, put them to their wit's end. And so the debate ended. As Jesus and his apostles were so constantly in discussions with their enemies, it is singular that so many professed Christians are now opposed to all discussions, all debates, all arguing. They class all discussions and debates as wrangles, and demand that they be kept out of the papers. They are above such things! It seems that the discussions at Damascus continued many days, and ended with a plot to kill Saul. Instead of yielding to the truth he had so successfully presented, they became so enraged that they laid a plot to kill him. Truth made them angry, and they sought to take their spite on him who brought God's truth to them. It was very like what happened in Jerusalem when the Jews could not meet the arguments of Stephen, excepting in that case they succeeded in carrying out their murderous plan. In this case the plot became known in time for Saul to escape. By this time Saul would have made numerous disciples and caused others to be favorable to the gospel. Through these the plot would become known to Saul. Damascus was a walled city. "And they watched the gates also day and night that they might kill him." They enlisted the help of the governor. Paul himself gives us this bit of history: "In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king guarded the city of the Damascenes in order to take me: and through a window was I let down in a basket by the wall, and escaped his hands." (2 Cor. 11:32, 33.) These Jews would also be with the guards to identify Saul for them. Houses were sometimes built on the walls of cities. Saul could not have been let down through a window had there not been a house on this wall. In a similar manner Rahab saved the spies at Jericho. (Josh. 2:15.)

**Saul Visits in Jerusalem (Verses 26-30)**

In speaking of the beginning of his ministry Paul says, "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and tarried with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother." (Gal. 1:18, 19.) When Saul tried to associate with the disciples in Jerusalem they were afraid of him. Either they had not heard of his conversion, or doubted his sincerity. They could not see how such a man as he had been could possibly now be a disciple of the Lord. Barnabas stood high in the estimation of the disciples in Jerusalem. In some way Barnabas had gathered sufficient information to convince him that Saul was a sincere disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. When he vouched for the integrity of Saul, telling the brethren of Saul's experience after he started out to persecute the saints in Damascus, doubts were dispelled. Why he saw only two of the apostles on this visit, we are not told. It must have been that the others were out of the city; for it seems certain that he would have seen all of them during his fifteen-day visit, had they been in the city. During these fifteen days he preached boldly in the name of the Lord; "and he spake and disputed against the Grecian Jews." But these Grecian Jews were not convinced. They acted as they did when Saul was with them in their arguing with Stephen, and as the Jews did at Damascus when they could not meet his arguments. The Jews had a thirst for the blood of anyone who did not agree with them. When the brethren learned that these Grecian Jews were seeking to kill Saul, they brought him down to Caesarea. They then sent him forth to Tarsus. Why bring him to Caesarea, and send him to Tarsus. They would not want him to travel alone so long as these Grecian Jews might follow him and kill him. Later Paul said to the chief captain in Jerusalem, "I am a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city." (Acts 21:39.) Tarsus was his native city.

**Saul with Barnabas at Antioch (Acts 11:25, 26)**

In preparing this section of our lesson the student should begin with verse 19: "They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord." Not all the disciples fled from Jerusalem during the persecution that raged there, or some had returned by the time word of the work at Antioch reached Jerusalem. "And they sent forth Barnabas as far as Antioch." There would have been no such statement made had the brethren not intended for Barnabas to visit the points where the brethren preached on their way from Jerusalem to Antioch. Barnabas was well pleased with the progress of the work at Antioch. "And he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." "And much people was added unto the Lord." There was promise of great results at Antioch, so much so that Barnabas felt that he needed help. "And he went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul." According to some authorities Saul went to Tarsus A.D. 39 and it was A.D. 44 when Barnabas brought him to Antioch.

During these years he would have done much preaching. It is probable that he established churches among the Galatians during these years. The language used shows that Barnabas did not know where he would find Saul, but he went to Tarsus to find out where Saul was. "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch." For a whole year they associated themselves with the church there, "and taught much people." Antioch was a great city, and a great center of commerce and travel. It was therefore an ideal place for a great church; for a good strong church in a city like Antioch will exert a much wider influence than would a church in some obscure place. Antioch is said to have been a notoriously corrupt city even for that age; but there would be many of its citizens who abhorred such corruption. To such the pure and elevating religion of Christ would have a mighty appeal. And probably many would feel the need of deliverance from their immoral practices. "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." It is not likely that anyone would give the disciples the name Christians as a term of reproach, for such it is not in any sense. The Jews would not call the disciples Christians, for to do so would be to acknowledge Jesus as Christ. Nor would the unbelieving Greeks give the name; for anyone who called the followers of Jesus Christians, thereby acknowledge Jesus to be the Christ. A Christian is a follower of Christ—that is the significance of the term. If Jesus were not the Christ, then there was no Christ for them to follow! And yet the name does not occur frequently in the New Testament. The name implied so much that the disciples, in their humility, many have felt a hesitancy in applying such an exalted name to themselves on all occasions. Peter gives this admonition: "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: but if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name." It does not seem that anyone could glorify God in a name given by the enemies of Christ. We can glorify God only in his appointments.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Saul's conversion to Christ and his subsequent preaching Christ and suffering for his loyalty to Christ should be a convincing argument to any man, and is to any man who honestly thinks.

Saul fled from Damascus by night and started on his long journey back to Jerusalem. In the lonely and solemn hours of that night, what must have been his emotions when he reached the place where the Lord of glory appeared to him! We can well imagine that he lingered there for a time, and in deep emotions recalled the scenes of that memorable occasion.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Saul's inspiration.  
Barnabas.  
The name Christian.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Discuss matters in Lesson Links.

#### Verses 19b-21

Tell about Saul's immediate activities in Damascus.

What does he say as to how the gospel came to him?

**Verses 22-25**

Give his further activities in Damascus after he returned from Arabia.  
 What stirred up the Jews so that they wanted to kill him?  
 Tell about his escape, and why that method of escape.

**Verses 26-30**

What does Paul say about this visit to Jerusalem?  
 What apostle did he see on that visit?  
 How did the disciples at first feel about him, and who vouched for him?  
 Tell about his activities in Jerusalem at this time.  
 Why did the brethren think it best for him to depart?

Where did they take him, then send him?

**Acts 11:25, 26**

Tell about the first preaching in Antioch.  
 How came Barnabas to go there?  
 What did he find when he arrived?  
 Discuss his exhortation to the saints.  
 What is said of the results of his work?  
 Tell about his getting Saul for a helper.  
 How long did they continue in that city?  
 What new name was given the disciples?  
 Give what you think was the origin of that name, and your reasons.  
 Discuss Peter's reference to the name Christian.  
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IV—April 23, 1944

**PAUL BECOMES A MISSIONARY**

Acts 13:1-4; 14:8-20

1 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

8 And at Lystra there sat a certain man, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked.

9 The same heard Paul speaking: who, fastening his eyes upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be made whole,

10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up and walked.

11 And when the multitudes saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercury, because he was the chief speaker.

13 And the priest of Jupiter whose temple was before the city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the multitudes.

14 But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they rent their garments, and sprang forth among the multitude, crying out

15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is:

16 Who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways.

17 And yet he left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness.

18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the multitudes from doing sacrifice unto them.

19 But there came Jews thither from Antioch and Iconium: and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.

20 But as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and entered into the city: and on the morrow he went forth with Barnabas to Derbe.



*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"The Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." (Acts 13:2.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Acts 1:6-11.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

April 17.	M	Paul Chosen and Sent (Acts 13:1-7)
April 18.	T	Paul's Healing Ministry (Acts 14:8-18)
April 19.	W	The Open Door of Faith (Acts 14:23-28)
April 20.	T	A Minister of Christ (2 Cor. 11:23-31)
April 21.	F	For the Gospel's Sake (1 Cor. 9:19-27)
April 22.	S	A Faithful Preacher (1 Thess. 2:1-9)
April 23.	S	God's Law in the Heart (Psalm 40:5-10)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—A.D. 43 or 44.

*Places.*—Antioch in Syria, Lystra, Derbe.

*Persons.*—Paul, Barnabas, certain prophets and teachers in Antioch, a cripple, and the people of Lystra.

*Lesson Links.*—The words "mission" and "missionary" are not found in the Bible. A missionary is one sent on a mission. The word "mission" comes to us from the Latin through the French, and means "to send." When the Lord appeared to Saul on the highway, he said to Saul, "But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee." (Acts 26:16, 17.) In his speech to the Jewish mob in Jerusalem, after having been rescued from the mob by Roman soldiers, Paul told them how he had persecuted Christians, and how he had been arrested in his mad career. Then he mentioned his first trip back to Jerusalem, and gave some facts not mentioned by Luke in Acts 9:26-29. "And it came to pass, that, when I had returned to Jerusalem, and while I prayed in the temple, I fell into a trance, and saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; because they will not receive of thee testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they themselves know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: and when the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting, and keeping the garments of them that slew him. And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles." (Acts 22:17-21.) Hence the Lord sent Paul out to preach years before he was sent from Antioch. He became a missionary when the Lord sent him. Saul was on a mission of preaching the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles in Cilicia, and probably also in Galatia, when Barnabas sought him, and induced him to come with him to Antioch, and he was carrying out the Lord's mission while he was preaching and teaching in Antioch.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### Prophets and Teachers at Antioch (Verse 1)

The origin of the church at Antioch of Syria is told in Acts 11:19-26. It grew rapidly, and soon became a great church. It is singular how rapidly some churches increase in numbers, while

others have to struggle for an existence. Some communities are ripe for the harvest, and others seem rather to be ripe for destruction. And the internal affairs of a church, the character of its members, their unity, and their liberality, have much to do with its growth and progress. If Christianity has not made its adherents in a community respectable and decent, if the gospel of peace has not made peace among its advocates, they need not expect people of decency and respectability to pay much attention to their plea. How a church begins has much to do with the way people of a community regard it. The Antioch church began right. Those who started it were willing to suffer, and had suffered, for their religion. They were men of such character as to command a respectful hearing. And they did not discriminate against the Gentiles. This church was well supplied with prophets and teachers. This is important in a large city. One teacher or preacher in a large city cannot accomplish much. Disciples should recognize this when they undertake to plant a church in a city.

There were prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch. It is plain from what is said in the New Testament that there were degrees of inspiration, different spiritual gifts. The apostles possessed the highest order, or the greatest abundance, of spiritual gifts. "God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues." (1 Cor. 12:28.) In spiritual gifts, or endowments, the apostles were first in rank, speaking in tongues the lowest. "Prophets and teachers"—prophets were teachers, but more than merely teachers; and so they are mentioned first. In the list of prophets and teachers at Antioch Saul comes last, being outranked by the others. He was not therefore at that time fully endowed as an apostle. Of the five prophets and teachers here mentioned only Barnabas and Saul are later mentioned, unless the Lucius here named is the one referred to in Rom. 16:21.

#### **The Holy Spirit Sends Barnabas and Saul into New Territory (Verses 2-4)**

The church had grown strong, and apparently was thinking about sending the gospel into other territory. "And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted." Perhaps they were asking the Lord to point out the ones that should go. At least that is the answer they received. "The Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." The Holy Spirit was doing the sending, and had selected Barnabas for the work, but would have the brethren—perhaps the whole church—to take part in the matter; that would increase their interest and cause them to feel some responsibility for the work. The church would furnish their expenses. It is good for the members of any church to have some part in preaching the gospel and establishing churches. "Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." This seems to be a different fasting from that mentioned in verse 2. It likely took Barnabas a few days to prepare for such an extended trip. Then this fasting and praying was done in connection with the laying on of their hands. The reason for this praying and laying on of hands has been a matter of dispute. Whatever else may be said about it, it was not done to ordain them

to be preachers; for Barnabas had been preaching twelve or thirteen years, and Saul had been preaching about eight or ten years. Both, of course, had been endowed with the Holy Spirit in sufficient measure to enable them to preach the word. Paul tells us plainly that he did not receive his authority to preach from man. (Gal. 1:11, 12, 17.) It seems that they prayed for God's favor to attend these two men on their difficult and dangerous mission; for in speaking of their return from this mission, Luke says, "... and thence they sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled." (Acts 14:26.) It seems more likely that they laid their hands on them as a token of fellowship in the work. "So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went ...." The Holy Spirit sent them, and was with them, enabling them to preach. They preached by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, else they could not have revealed the will of God. And that is the point Paul had in mind when he said, "How shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Rom. 10:15.) It is a perversion of facts and of Paul's language to say that a preacher cannot now preach except some church sends him.

It is interesting to follow Paul in his journeys from Antioch, noting each city he visited. One should then be able to mention every city he visited on each journey, and be able to name them in the order in which he visited them. On this first journey from Antioch they took shipping at Seleucia, the seaport town about sixteen miles from Antioch, and sailed to Cyprus. "And they had also John [Mark] as their attendant." (Verse 5.)

### **Paul Heals a Cripple (Acts 14:8-10)**

Paul and Barnabas preached extensively as they journeyed from one end of the island of Cyprus to the other, whence they crossed to the mainland of Asia Minor. It seems that they did not preach anywhere until they reach Antioch of Pisidia. At Antioch they met with some success and also bitter persecution; the same was true at Iconium. The Jews that were disobedient stirred up the trouble at Iconium, as they had done at Antioch. When Paul and Barnabas learned of a decision to stone them, they fled to Lystra, and preached the gospel in that city "and the region round about." Evidently there was no synagogue in Lystra, for none is mentioned. As there was no synagogue in which to preach, they most likely went to the market place, where they would always find some people. This also was a good place for any helpless people to beg for alms. "And at Lystra there sat a certain man, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked." "A certain man" —a man well known, as such a cripple would be. "The same heard Paul speaking"—literally, "was hearing Paul speaking," was in the habit of hearing Paul speak. He had come to believe what Paul preached. Paul, seeing that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, "Stand upright on thy feet." Paul spoke with a loud voice so that all could hear; he wanted the miracle to be noticed, so that it would increase the interest of the people in his preaching. "And he leaped up and walked." Now, a man that never had walked would naturally have to learn how to walk, but this man walked immediately; hence a double miracle was wrought.

**The People Defy Paul and Barnabas (Verses 11-13)**

That miracle excited the people beyond reason. They certainly had not been paying attention to Paul's preaching; for he had been preaching the gospel that there is one God, and that Jesus the Christ was Lord, and he and Barnabas were servants; but even if they had heard the preaching, it was not the way they wanted to go. They were idolaters and highly superstitious, as are all idolaters. "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." It is said that a legend then current among them was, that a long time ago the gods had come down in the likeness of men and had appeared to a man and his wife near there, and because the couple entertained them in their humble cabin, when no one else would respect them, the gods converted their cabin into a temple. It was easy and pleasant for them to believe that they were being honored by another such visit. Jupiter was the chief god, and Mercury was his messenger. As Paul did most of the talking, they regarded him as the messenger of Jupiter. It seems that Paul and Barnabas had gone to their place of abode before this sort of talk became widespread, and before the priests made arrangements to worship them in sacrificing animals. It was all pretty well under way when Paul and Barnabas heard what was going on.

**Paul Seeks to Enlighten Them (Verses 14-18)**

When Paul and Barnabas learned what was going on, they hastened to put a stop to such proceedings. They wanted no such honors. They made no claims of superiority over others—"men of like passions with you." But we do bring to you glad tidings—tidings of salvation from sin and from such vain things. There is a living God to worship, who is the creator of all things, and "who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways." "And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting." (Rom. 1:28.) God suffered them—gave them up, but they were nonetheless sinners—"sinners of the Gentiles." "And yet he left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness." The whole course of nature proves to a discerning mind that there is a supreme intelligence that keeps all things performing their proper functions. Yes, there are what we call the laws of nature, but no law operates itself. As such operations as Paul mentioned were a witness to the heathen world, so should they be to us. "And with these sayings scarce restrained they the multitudes from doing sacrifice unto them."

**The Multitudes Stoned Paul (Verses 19, 20)**

The Jews of Antioch and Iconium had no love for the Gentiles of Lystra, but they hated Paul; so they came down and stirred up these Gentiles against Paul, and "they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead"—dragged him out of the city as they would drag a dead animal. And these were the same men who had regarded Paul as a god, and would have worshiped him. And of course these bloodthirsty Jews return to their home in high glee. They had judged themselves unworthy of eternal life. These people were so disappointed at the refusal of Paul and

Barnabas to be worshiped, that this refusal may have made it easier for the Jews to stir them to a killing mood. But the whole circumstance shows how fickle a multitude can be. It reminds one of the "Hosannas" in Jerusalem, followed by the cry, "Crucify him, crucify him." But Paul was not dead, as they had thought. We can imagine something of the sadness of the disciples, and especially of Barnabas, as they stood around Paul as he lay seemingly lifeless on the ground. But he rose up, and went back into the city. "And on the morrow he went forth with Barnabas to Derbe. He must have been miraculously healed of his wounds, else he would have been too sore and bruised to walk.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

The twelve apostles chosen by Christ during his personal ministry went through a period of testing and development before they began to operate as apostles, and it appears to be so with Paul. In the list in Acts 13:1 Saul comes last. When he and Barnabas started out from Antioch, it was "Barnabas and Saul" until Saul subdued Elymas the sorcerer at Paphos; then it became "Paul and Barnabas." Perhaps at this time he was fully empowered by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He must have received this baptism, this full endowment, at the same time; for he says, "For I reckon that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles"—"for in nothing was I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I am nothing." (2 Cor. 11:5; 12:11.) As he was behind them in nothing, he was therefore not behind them in the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Taking the gospel to others.  
Rom. 10:14-17.  
Paul's speech at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:32-41).

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
When did Saul become a missionary?  
Give proof.  
Tell his movements up to his labors in and around Antioch.

#### Verse 1

Tell about the origin of the church in Antioch of Syria.  
Name some things that help a church to grow, and some things that hinder.  
Discuss verse 1.

#### Verses 2-4

What seems to have been the occasion of the fasting and praying?  
What did the Holy Spirit say to them?  
Who sent Barnabas and Saul on this preaching journey?  
From whom did Paul receive his authority to

#### Acts 14:8-10

Give places visited by Paul and Barnabas from Antioch of Syria to Lystra.  
Tell what happened at Antioch of Pisidia and at Iconium.  
Tell about the cripple, and Paul's healing him.

#### Verses 11-13

What did the multitudes say and attempt to do?  
Tell about the legend then current in Lystra.

#### Verses 14-18

What did Paul and Barnabas do to stop the multitudes?  
Discuss their speech to the multitudes.

#### Verses 19, 20

Who stirred up trouble at Lystra?  
Why did these Jews do this?  
What were the results?  
Give substance of verse 19.  
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson V—April 30, 1944

**PAUL WINS RECOGNITION FOR GENTILE CHRISTIANS**

Acts 15:23b-29; Gal. 2:1, 2, 9, 10, 20, 21

23 The apostles and the elders, brethren, unto the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greeting:

24 Forasmuch as we have heard that certain who went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandment;

25 It seemed good unto us, having come to one accord, to choose out men and send them unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who themselves also shall tell you the same things by word of mouth.

28 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things:

29 That ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you. Fare ye well.

1 Then after the space of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus also with me.

2 And I went up by revelation; and I laid before them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles but privately before them who were of repute, lest by any means I should be running, or had run, in vain.

9 And when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto- the circumcision;

10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; which very thing I was also zealous to do.

20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.

21 I do not make void the grace of God: for if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nought.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:1.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Eph. 2:11-22.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

April 24.	M	When Christians Confer (Acts 15:1-6)
April 25.	T	A Christian Compromise (Acts 15:22-29)
April 26.	W	Justification by Faith (Gal. 2:11-21)
April 27.	T	The Law and the Gospel (Gal. 3:19-29)
April 28.	F	Freedom in Christ (Gal. 5:1, 13-18)
April 29.	S	Salvation for All (Acts 13:44-49)
April 30.	S	The Spirit of Christ (Isa. 42:1-9)

**LESSON SETTINGS**

*Time.*—For Acts 15, probably A.D. 50; A.D. 55 or 56 when the letter to the Galatians was written.

*Places.*—The trouble about circumcision originated at Antioch in Syria, and was settled at Jerusalem. The letter to the Galatians was written at Ephesus.

*Persons.*—Paul, Barnabas, certain men from Judaea, the brethren at Antioch, Peter, James, Judas, Silas, the apostles, the elders at Jerusalem, and the whole church at Jerusalem.

*Lesson Links.*—Many of the Jewish Christians looked upon Christianity as a mere extension of the Jews' religion—just another sect of the Jews' religion. At first these Christians in Jerusalem did not think the gospel should be preached to Gentiles. Hence, when Peter returned to Jerusalem after preaching at the house of Cornelius, "they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them." Peter knew their objection was that he carried the gospel to Gentiles; he therefore answered what was in their heart, and not what they said. But he convinced them that he was completely under God's direction in all that he had done. But a new contention was made at Antioch. No objection was made there against baptizing Gentiles. "And certain men came down from Judaea and taught the brethren, saying, Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved. And when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and questioning with them, the brethren appointed that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question." Paul and Barnabas did not go up to Jerusalem to find out the truth about the matter, but the Judaizers did not recognize Paul as an apostle nor the inspiration of Barnabas. If they had done so, the matter would have been settled at Antioch. But they had to go to those whom these disturbers would recognize as having authority. This question had to be settled by inspiration. They did not go up to Jerusalem to hold a council for the church there to settle the matter. If it was to be settled by the church, Antioch was the place to settle it. One church cannot tell other churches what to do—that is the business of God's inspired ambassadors. When Paul and Barnabas reached Jerusalem they first had a private meeting with the apostles and elders. These inspired men had no trouble in reaching an agreement, for they were guided by the Holy Spirit. But to promote peace and harmony it was necessary for all the brethren to be fully satisfied as to what the will of God was. They must have agreed on a plan of procedure before they went before the whole church. In that meeting Peter spoke first, and showed how God had approved his preaching to the Gentiles. Then Paul and Barnabas showed that God had approved their work among the Gentiles by wonders and signs. As James had not been mixed up in preaching to Gentiles, it was proper for him to sum matters up, and announce the decision. The church, being enlightened, was satisfied.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### **The Judaizers Were Acting Without Apostolic Authority (Verses 23, 24)**

Verse 22: "Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men out of their company, and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren." Had not prominent men in the church at Jerusalem accompanied Paul and Barnabas, the Judaizers at Antioch might have claimed that Paul and Barnabas did not correctly report what was done at Jerusalem, and might even claim the letter was a forgery, so bitter were they against Paul. According to the custom of the times, the letter was signed at the beginning—"The apostles and the elders." It was addressed

to "the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia." This shows how extensively these Judaizers had traveled with their disruptive teaching. Of course the letter would apply to any church that might then or later be disturbed by Judaizers. The letter begins with the term "greeting," as did the Epistle of James, which indicates that James worded this letter. None of the other inspired writers began a letter in that way—the only other writer to use the term was a Roman officer. (Acts 23:26.) "Forasmuch as we have heard that certain who went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandment." These Judaizers had not gone to Antioch and other cities to preach the gospel of Christ, but the law of Moses; they had not gone out to convert sinners, but to pervert the gospel and to subvert the souls of disciples of Christ. Paul called them false brethren. (Gal. 2:4.) They falsely claimed to represent the apostles, for James said they had given them no such commandment. They were professed Christians, but were more Jewish than Christian. To them Christianity was a mere sect of the Jews' religion. Their contention belittled the gospel of Christ; it was a blow at the very foundation of the plan of salvation through Christ. With them a man might obey the gospel and become an ardent follower of Christ, but it took obedience to the law to save him. In that view Christ was not a Savior, and the grace of God through Christ was of no real value. It is no wonder that Paul fought that doctrine with all the power he had. Had not he or someone else made the fight he made, Christianity would have been reduced by these Judaizers to a sect of the Jews. He gloried in Christ, and not in the law.

### **One Accord (Verses 25-27)**

It is hard for people to overcome a long-standing habit of thought. To the Jews of Jerusalem the Gentiles were unclean, and of God utterly cast off. The Christian Jews would in a great measure share those sentiments; but they gave heed to the voice of the Holy Spirit as he spoke through Peter, Paul, Barnabas, and James. The speeches of these men brought them all to one accord. And that was the design of the speeches. And they had reached another decision; they would do something to relieve the situation where these Judaizing meddlers had caused trouble, and also where they might cause trouble. For it is a historic fact that this inspired decision did not stop the mouths of all the Judaizers, for they dogged the movements of Paul as long as he lived. The brethren chose out certain men of high standing in the Jerusalem church to go with Paul and Barnabas, whom they spoke of as "our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." It was necessary that the brethren at Jerusalem select these men, and to give their names, so that the Judaizers could not say that Paul and Barnabas selected men that agreed with them. "We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who themselves also shall tell you the same things by word of mouth." There were no weak points in that letter for factionists to profit by. Anyone who has had any experience with factionists in the church knows that factionists will resort to all kinds of schemes to contravene the right and carry their point. James later said, "For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed." (James 3:16.)



**Things from Which Gentiles Must Abstain (Verses 28, 29)**

"It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us." The "us" were the apostles and elders, signers of the letter. (Verse 23.) It seemed good to the apostles and elders to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit. It seemed good that only the things named should be demanded of the Gentiles, and thus to be free from circumcision. They were to abstain from "things sacrificed to idols"—they were to do nothing that would seem to favor idol worship. "And from blood." That requirement was made immediately after the flood, and might have been in effect even before the flood. It was incorporated in the law of Moses. Many times the law of Moses repeated the prohibition against the eating of blood. They were not to eat blood, "for the life of all flesh is the blood." (Lev. 17:10-14.) Again, "Thou shalt not eat it; that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee." (Deut. 12:23-25.) The letter prohibited the eating of things strangled, for a strangled animal or bird retained its blood. Many wring a chicken's neck just enough to kill it. Its head should be severed from the body, so that the blood may drain from its body; if not, it is the same as to strangle it. We are told that immorality was common among the heathen at that time; it is a growing evil today. Gentile Christians would have to be on guard against such practices as the letter prohibits, for it is easy for people to fall into the prevailing habits. "From which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you." When the brethren reported to the church at Antioch and read the letter to them, "they rejoiced for the consolation." It was a great relief to the Gentile Christians to know that they were free from the law of Moses—that they could be saved without being circumcised and keeping the law.

**"I Went Up by Revelation" (Gal. 2:1, 2)**

Whether the visit to Jerusalem about the matter of circumcision was fourteen years after Paul's conversion, or fourteen years after the visit mentioned in Gal. 1:18, is a matter of no special importance to us. It seems that Paul and Barnabas did not see the need of going to Jerusalem about the matter of circumcising the Gentile Christians. They had, of course, told the brethren at Antioch, and also the Judaizing disturbers, how God had approved their work among the Gentiles by signs and wonders: but that did not stop the mouths of the Judaizers. And so it was revealed to Paul that he should go to Jerusalem to those whom the Judaizers claimed to represent. "And I laid before them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles but privately before them who were of repute, lest by any means I should be running, or had run, in vain." This does not mean that he was in doubt about the course he had pursued, for he knew that God had approved his work by signs and wonders. But if the apostles endorsed these Judaizers, if all Gentile Christians were to be required to be circumcised and to keep the law of Moses, thus reducing the church to a mere Jewish sect, then all his labors had been in vain: the whole plan of salvation through Christ would be so perverted as to be worthless. That was the thing Paul feared, and not that he had done wrong in preaching to the Gentiles. The churches of Galatia had been almost ruined by these Judaizers who gave no heed to the decrees of the apostles and elders. Neither at Antioch nor at Jerusalem did Paul give place in the way of subjection, no, not

for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." (Verse 5.) It was not therefore a mere opinion that Paul was fighting for, but for the truth of the gospel.

### **Paul's Contention Sustained (Verses 9, 10)**

Verse 9 is a part of a long sentence, which begins with verse 6 and runs through verse 10. Apparently the Judaizers had made some headway in convincing the Galatian brethren that Paul was not an apostle of the Lord; they made that charge continuously. Paul informs these brethren that the apostles in Jerusalem imparted nothing to him; on the contrary, they saw from the reports he made that God intrusted to him the preaching of the gospel to the uncircumcised. "And when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision." "Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I glorify my ministry." (Rom. 11:13.) In addition to ministering to the Gentiles, the apostles at Jerusalem desired that he remember the poor; that is, the poor in Judaea. His later actions show that he was zealous to do this very thing.

### **"Christ Liveth in Me" (Verses 20, 21)**

Paul uses a striking figure of speech, "I have been crucified with Christ." When Saul of Tarsus became a disciple of the Lord there was one less sinner in the world, as certainly and as effectively as if he had really died and been buried in the ground. "It is no longer I that live." Persecuting Saul was dead. A different man was now living—"Christ liveth in me." His life was now a life of faith—faith in the Son of God. To be of Jewish flesh meant nothing to him. He had no confidence in any fleshly relationship. (Phil. 3:3.) His confidence was in the Christ, the Son of God, and not in the law in any sense. "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law." (Gal. 3:13.) To trust in the law would make void the grace of God; "for if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nought." If men can be saved in any way save through Christ, then Christ died for nought. "For except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24.)

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

It does seem that the decrees sent out by the apostles and elders from Jerusalem would have stopped the mouths of all Judaizing meddlers, but not so. The inspired words of apostles seem to have meant nothing to these troublemakers; but is that not usually true of troublemakers even today? The letter to the Galatians, written several years after the decrees were sent out, shows that these subverters of souls were still busy, and had about ruined the churches of Galatia, and had made headway in discrediting Paul as an apostle. "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; which is not another gospel: only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." Then he declared that the curse of God rested on these gospel perverters. (Gal. 1:6-9.) Then he gives this warning: "Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law," (Gal. 5:4.)

**TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION**

When the law ended.  
Paul and the Judaizers.

**QUESTIONS**

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

What was their purpose in going over the country?  
Why was their contention such a serious matter?

**Lesson Settings**

Give time, places, and persons.  
At the beginning of the gospel, what was the attitude of all Jewish Christians toward the Gentiles?  
Tell about Peter's experience after returning from preaching to the Gentiles.  
What next did some of the Jewish Christians demand of Gentile Christians?  
Tell about the controversy at Antioch, and what was done about it.

**Verses 25-27**  
Discuss verse 25.  
Why give the names of the brethren sent with Paul and Barnabas, and state in the letter who selected them?

**Verses 28, 29**

Discuss the things from which the Gentiles must abstain.  
Discuss the effect of the letter at Antioch.

**Verses 23, 24**

Describe the meeting at Jerusalem.  
Discuss verse 22.  
Why was it necessary to send Jerusalem brethren with Paul and Barnabas?  
Who does it seem wrote out the letter to the Gentile churches?  
What is said of these Judaizers?

**Gal. 2:1, 2 Verses 9, 10**  
Discuss these verses, and tell what Paul feared.  
Beginning with verse 6, discuss the whole sentence running through verse 10.

**Verses 20, 21**

Read and discuss these verses.  
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VI—May 7, 1944

**PAUL CROSSES INTO EUROPE**

Acts 16:13-15; Phil. 3:7-14

13 And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake unto the women that were come together.

14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyratira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul.

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

7 Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ.

8 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,

9 And be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith:

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death;

11 If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before,

14 I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:14.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Phil. 1:3-11.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

May 1. M	Lydia Won for Christ (Acts 16:11-15)
May 2. T	Sanctified Suffering (Acts 16:16-24)
May 3. W	A Jailer Won for Christ (Acts 16:25-34)
May 4. T	Paul's Supreme Objective (1 Cor. 9:16-27)
May 5. F	Paul's Supreme Confidence (2 Tim. 4:9-18)
May 6. S	Paul's Supreme Hope (1 Cor. 15:50-58)
May 7. S	The Lord Will Help (Isa. 50:4-9)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—For Acts, probably A.D. 50 or 51; for Phil. 3:7-14, A.D. 62 or 63.

*Places.*—Philippi; Paul's place of imprisonment was in Rome.

*Persons.*—Paul, Silas, Timothy, Lydia and her household, and the church at Philippi.

*Lesson Links.*—In preparing these lessons the student should keep up the connections. It would be well therefore to begin reading at Acts 15:35 and read through the sixteenth chapter.

Some days after Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch with the letter written by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return now and visit the brethren in every city wherein we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they fare." Barnabas again wanted to take Mark with them. "But Paul thought not good to take with them him who withdrew from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work." Paul was disappointed in Mark for quitting them on their former journey. "And there arose a sharp contention, so that they parted asunder one from the other, and Barnabas took Mark with him, and sailed away unto Cyprus: but Paul chose Silas, and went forth, being commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches." At Lystra Paul found a certain disciple named Timothy. "The same was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium." Paul took this excellent young disciple with him as helper in the work. "And as they went on their way through the cities, they delivered them the decrees to keep which had been ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily." On this journey Paul had desired to preach the word in Asia, but was forbidden of the Holy Spirit to do so. Then he wanted to turn aside into Bithynia, "and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not." When they reached Troas, "a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto them." This is the first time Luke in his narrative used the words "we" and "us"; and this shows that he joined Paul's company at this place. They sailed across to Neapolis, thence they journeyed to "Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a Roman colony: and we were in this city tarrying certain days."

They would, of course, put in these days investigating matters—making a survey.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### **Paul's First European Converts to Christ (Verses 13-15)**

There was no synagogue in Philippi; had there been, Paul and his company would have gone to it on the Sabbath. There were not a sufficient number of Jews in Philippi to build a synagogue; in fact, it seems that there was not a Jew in the city, nor any man who was converted to the Jews' religion. On the Sabbath when Paul and his company went out of the city to a place where they supposed there was a place of prayer, they found only some women, no men. It is not certain that any were present save Lydia and her household. "And we sat down, and spake unto the women that were come together." Lydia was a merchant, a seller of purple. She might have been a dealer in the purple dye, or in fabrics dyed with purple dye. The purple dye was obtained in small quantities from various kinds of shellfish found in various parts of the Mediterranean Sea. Gathering it was a slow and tedious business, which made it a very costly article; and the goods dyed with it were so costly that only people of wealth could buy them. To be a dealer in such materials required considerable capital. Lydia must therefore have been a woman of considerable wealth. Her home city was Thyratira, in Asia north of Ephesus. "One that worshipped God." She would not have been thus described, had she been a Jewess—that a Jewess worshiped God would have been taken for granted. She was therefore a woman who had been converted from heathenism to the Jews' religion. She was now hearing of a better way, a way of salvation from sin, a new and living way; and she was giving honest attention to what she was hearing. "Whose heart the Lord opened." There is not the slightest reason for assuming that the Lord opened Lydia's heart by a direct operation of the Spirit. Besides, the advocates of that theory fail to notice that, if the Lord did it by a direct work of the Spirit, he did not do it in person, but through an agent or by means. When the Lord does a thing by means, he does it. The story of redeeming love was attractive to Lydia. The Lord opened her heart by the story of the cross. If a person's heart stays closed against the gospel, it is because he refuses to see or hear. (Matt. 13:15.) Paul had been sent to preach to the people, "to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God." (Acts 26:17, 18.) The gospel is God's power for saving people. (Rom. 1:16.) If it has no power to open the heart, then it has no power to save. Lydia listened to the story of the cross, and that opened her heart "to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul." The word from which we have "give heed," does not mean to hear, or to listen to, but to devote one's self to. Lydia heard the gospel preached, it opened her heart, and she obeyed it. She and her household were baptized. This shows how she gave heed, or was devoted to, the things Paul preached. Though she was not a European, she was Paul's first European convert. Her household followed her example. Her household was most likely her helpers in her business. This case furnishes no support to the dogma of infant baptism. It is strange how people think they find infant baptism where no infant is so

much as mentioned. There is no evidence that Lydia had any infants, or even any children; and no evidence that she had a husband, or ever had one. There are indications that she was not a married woman. Notice the delicate way in which she invited Paul and his company to abide in her house. "She besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there." "My house"—if she had been a married woman, she would not have said "my house." And it would have been her husband's place to invite these men into his house. She was the head of the family—her helpers.

### **Things That Were Gain, Now Counted Loss for Christ (Phil. 3:7, 8)**

Although Paul had been a prisoner for a period of four or five years, his enemies were still seeking to make trouble in the churches he had established. Notice the preceding verses in chapter three. He uses strong language: "Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the concision"—"the concision" were those who cut themselves off from other Christians. The Judaizers were doing that. They put great stress on the flesh, not simply their bodies, but their Jewish flesh. With them a man had either to be born a Jew, or be circumcised in the flesh, or he could not be saved. But race meant nothing to Paul he had no confidence in any such fleshly relationship. And yet he says he had more grounds for glorying in the flesh than his critics. At one time he prided himself on the very things his critics gloried in. "Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ." What he once gloried in was even then a loss to him. Life in Christ now meant more to him than all things else. He gave it all up "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." The knowledge of Christ Jesus is the knowledge revealed of him the gospel. For Christ, for the knowledge revealed about him, Paul suffered the loss of all things, including the loss, perhaps, of his earthly goods. No man ever gave up more to be a humble follower of Christ than did Paul. But he counted all things he lost but refuse, that he might gain Christ.

### **Paul's Great Desire (Verses 9-11)**

What the Jews were holding to so tenaciously and what the Judaizers were trying so hard to fasten on the Gentiles, Paul counted loss, a detriment, refuse (human excrement); all these things he gave up for Christ, that he might be found in him. If one sought to find where Paul was religiously, he informs them that he was in Christ, "not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law." No one could have a righteousness which is of the law without keeping the law perfectly. The law condemns even one violation, and never forgives. Paul gave up all Judaism that he might have the righteousness "which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith." Righteousness is freedom from the guilt of sin. When through faith in Christ a man obtains God's forgiveness, when by virtue of the blood of Christ a man is cleansed of his sins, he is at the moment as free from sin as if he never had sinned; he is righteous. It is a righteousness from God, for through forgiveness God makes him righteous. For

that righteousness Paul had given up as refuse all things that he formerly took pride in. "That I may know him." Many people think they know Christ when they are barely acquainted with him and his mission. The more experience Paul had in following Christ the more he would know him. Would you know Christ, then become his devoted followers; and the longer you follow him the more you will know him. We will never fully know him in this world, nor can we fully know the power of his resurrection. But we do know that the whole scheme of human redemption depended on his resurrection. "The fellowship of his sufferings"—to take part with him in suffering, and Paul did suffer much; he suffered even unto death. All men will be raised from the dead, but Paul was seeking a resurrection that was a resurrection indeed. To the wicked the resurrection will be of no advantage.

### **"I Press On" (Verse 12)**

Paul had not fully obtained that for which he was striving. He had not reached the point where he felt that the fight was over and the victory won. When some people reach a certain point in life, they feel that they have done their part, and they retire from active service when they could yet do more. There is no retirement age in the service of God until one reaches the point where he can do no more. Paul did not consider himself perfect; a feeling of perfection stops all progress. Paul had done more than any other one man, but he was not satisfied. "I press on." I pursue the object of my heart's desire; "if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus." Paul knew that Jesus had a purpose in laying hold on him—capturing him—and he would bring his life into harmony with that purpose; he would seek to attain to the very thing Christ had in view in calling him into his service. God has a purpose in every one of his followers, and each servant of Christ should make the purpose of Christ his purpose. In doing so, we have fellowship with him in shaping and moulding our own character.

### **"I Press On Toward the Goal" (Verses 13, 14)**

"I count not myself yet to have laid hold"—the greatest desire of his heart had not yet been attained. The goal was yet ahead. To him the Christian life was a race. He was writing to people who were familiar with the Grecian races. In these races there was a goal to reach, and a prize to be won. Paul, though a prisoner for some years, was still in the race; he was still pressing on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. He had not yet reached the goal; the prize was yet to be won. He speaks of the life in serving God as a "high calling." And why not? The Christian is a child of God, and therefore an heir of God to all the riches of the universe. How simple is one who thinks the Christian life is below his dignity! Paul esteemed so highly this high calling, that he considered all things but refuse. It is a strange combination of words to say it, but one must be humble, must be lowly, to follow this high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let no one think that the Christian life is a lowly calling, and that such a life does not require heroic efforts; and yet it is a glorious life. There are rewards here; but the great prize, eternal life, eternal habitation

with God and our Savior and the redeemed of all ages, is a glorious prospect, a glorious reward.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

There are only two conceivable ways in which, or by which, people can be righteous; namely, to live without sin or to have all sin blotted out. Only Christ lived without sin. No man of mature age can claim that he never sinned. If a man did live without sin he would be righteous on his own account; he would merit justification. His justification would not be a matter of grace, but of works. If a man sins, he cannot justify himself by any amount of good works he may do. Were it not for the gospel, man's case would be hopeless; and if the gospel did not provide a way by which the guilty may become righteous, man's condition would still be hopeless. But the gospel is God's power for salvation, for in it is revealed a plan by which the unrighteous may be made righteous. If it did not do this, it would not be a power to save men. But hear Paul: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is revealed a righteousness of God ...." (Rom. 1:16, 17.) God's plan of righteousness is revealed in the gospel. Men become righteous through their obedience to the gospel. In that obedience there is forgiveness, there is cleansing from sin. All guilt is removed, and a man is then as clean, as righteous, as if he never had sinned. Not that the sinner, still corrupt, is clothed with the clean righteousness of Christ; but he is made clean through the merits of Christ's blood. Herein God's love, grace, and mercy are seen to flow at full tide.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Why is the gospel God's power for salvation?  
The superiority of Christianity over Judaism.

### QUESTIONS

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

"flesh"?  
Discuss verses 7 and 8.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Tell about the disturbance between Paul and Barnabas.  
Trace Paul's travels from Antioch to Troas.  
How many, and who were in Paul's company when they left Troas?  
Why did they leave Troas, and to what city did they go?

#### Verses 13-15

Tell how Paul and his company began their work in Philippi.  
Tell about Lydia, and discuss her conversion.  
How was her heart opened, and what does "to give heed" mean?  
Why is there no proof of infant baptism in that conversion?

#### Phil. 3:7, 8

Discuss verses 3-6.  
In this connection what does Paul mean by

#### Verses 9-11

What estimate did Paul put on the things he gave up?  
Why did he give up all these Jewish customs and laws?  
What is it to be righteous by law?  
What is this "righteousness which is from God," and how is it obtained?  
Why will we while still in the flesh never know Christ fully?  
What sort of resurrection was Paul seeking?

#### Verse 12

Discuss verse 12.

#### Verses 13, 14

Discuss verse 13.  
What imagery does "goal" and "prize" call to mind?  
Discuss the Christian life as a high calling.  
Discuss the reflections.



## Lesson VII—May 14, 1944

**PAUL IN THESSALONICA**

Acts 17:1-4; 1 Thess. 2:1-12

1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

2 And Paul, as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three sabbath days reasoned with them from the scriptures,

3 Opening and alleging that it behooved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom, said he, I proclaim unto you. is the Christ.

4 And some of them were persuaded, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

1 For yourselves, brethren, know our entering in unto you, that it hath not been found vain:

2 But having suffered before and been shamefully treated, as ye know, at Philippi, we waxed bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God in much conflict.

3 For our exhortation is not of error, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:

4 But even as we have been approved of God to be intrusted with the gospel, so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God who proveth our hearts.

5 For neither at any time were we found using words of flattery, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness, God is witness;

6 Nor seeking glory of men, neither from you nor from others, when we might have claimed authority as apostles of Christ.

7 But we were gentle in the midst of you, as when a nurse cherisheth her own children:

8 Even so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were well pleased to impart unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were become very dear to us.

9 For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail: working night and day that we might not burden any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

10 Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and righteously and unblameably we behaved ourselves toward you that believe:

11 As ye know how we dealt with each one of you, as a father with his own children, exhorting you, and encouraging you, and testifying,

12 To the end that ye should walk worthily of God, who calleth you into his own kingdom and glory.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks." (1 Thess. 5:16-18.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—1 Thess. 1:2-10.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

May 8. M

May 9. T

May 10. W

May 11. T

May 12. F

May 13. S

May 14. S

Paul Preaching in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-5)

Intrusted with the Gospel (1 Thess. 2:1-12)

Called to Sanctification (1 Thess. 4:1-12)

Watch and Be Sober (1 Thess. 5:1-11)

Heirs of the Eternal Life (Tit. 3:1-7)

Spiritual Cooperation (1 Thess. 5:12-28)

The Patience of Christ (2 Thess. 3:1-5)

**LESSON SETTINGS**

*Time.*—A.D. 50 or 51; A.D. 52 or 53.

*Places.*—Thessalonica; First Thessalonians was written at Corinth.

*Persons.*—Paul and the Thessalonians.

*Lesson Links.*—Our last lesson left Paul and his company at Philippi. He had just made his first converts in that city. The last converts he made in that city on this trip were the jailer and his house. But many days were spent preaching in that city before the jailer and his house became believers. Concerning the happen-

ings during these days Luke says, "And it came to pass, as we were going to the place of prayer, that a certain maid having a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much gain by soothsaying. The same following after Paul and us cried out, saying, These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim unto you the way of salvation. And this she did for many days. But Paul, being sore troubled, turned and said to the spirit, I charge thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out that very hour." It appears that this maid was owned by a company of men, but the source of their gain was now gone; their property had become worthless to them. In hot anger "they laid hold on Paul and Silas, and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers." Did they state to the rulers their real complaint against Paul and Silas? They would not have gained a hearing, had they first stated their real complaint, and they knew it. They knew that generally the Jews were not favorable to the Roman government, and therefore it would be easy to make trouble for Paul and Silas by a trumped-up charge. "These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive, or to observe, being Romans." Then the rabble began their clamor against the two helpless men. Without making any investigation the rulers stripped the garments off Paul and Silas, and by order of these same rulers they were beaten with rods. They gave Paul and Silas no chance to say anything, and had they said anything, the howling of the mob would have drowned out their speech. And this was the much boasted Roman justice! Paul and Silas were then cast into prison; and the jailer put them in the inner prison, a dark, dank dungeon. They were treated as desperate criminals, though they had been doing only good. But the jailer's conversion, is next told. The next morning the magistrates sent officers to the jailer with a message to let them go; but Paul had regard for the cause he represented. They had been publicly disgraced in the eyes of the people, and Paul was determined not to leave such a cloud over the cause he represented and the disciples who had embraced that cause; so he said, "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, and have cast us into prison; and do they now cast us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and bring us out." When the rulers learned that they were Romans, that is, Roman citizens, they came and begged Paul and Silas to make no trouble for them; for they knew that these men could report them, and make much trouble for them. They were glad to get off by publicly letting these men go. Paul and Silas were in no hurry to go, for they took time to visit in the house of Lydia, and perhaps others.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### Paul Preaches in Thessalonica (Verses 1-4)

Luke's use of the pronouns "we" and "they" shows that he remained at Philippi. Newly converted and surrounded by heathenism, these new disciples would need just such help as Luke could give. His remaining there may account for their sending help so soon to Paul at Thessalonica; for he was in a position to know Paul's needs in a strange place better than new disciples could possibly know. "For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need."

(Phil. 4:16.) In going from Philippi they passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia. From Philippi to Amphipolis was thirty-two miles; from Amphipolis to Apollonia, thirty-two miles; thence to Thessalonica, thirty-six miles. They probably spent a night in each city they passed through, but it seems that they found no synagogue in either Amphipolis or Apollonia. Thessalonica was the first city they visited in Europe "where was a synagogue of the Jews." When Paul went to a city where there was a synagogue, he began his preaching in the synagogue. He did not do this because God favored the Jews above the Gentiles, for he taught that God made no distinction between the two. (Rom. 10:12.) It was the most effective procedure; for in the synagogues he found people who accepted the Old Testament scriptures as inspired of God, even though they made poor use of them. He and they had some things in common; in his preaching he could appeal to an authority which they accepted. Here also he would find some devout Gentiles, who had been turned from the worship of idols by the teaching and influence of the Jews; and through these he could reach other Gentiles. To the Jew first, and then to the Greeks was not a matter of favoritism, but of wisdom. At Thessalonica Paul reasoned for three Sabbath days with the attendants, using their scriptures as proof of what he was preaching about the Christ, "opening and alleging that it behooved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead." Every informed Jew knew that a man named Jesus had lived in Palestine, and that he was crucified at Jerusalem; but they had a notion that the Christ, when he came, would abide forever, and therefore would not suffer death. (John 12:32-34.) That notion had to be removed before they would believe that this Jesus who was crucified was the Christ. Hence Paul showed them from the scriptures that it was necessary that the Christ should "suffer, and to rise again from the dead." Having established this point, he could then proceed to show them that this Jesus whom he proclaimed to them was the Christ. And his preaching brought results. "And some of them," that is, some of the Jews, "were persuaded, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few." And this was the result of the work of three Sabbaths and of the two intervening weeks. And so a strong church was set up within fifteen days. The student should read on through verse 10.

### **Paul's Thessalonian Labors Not in Vain (1 Thess. 2:1, 2)**

The section of our lesson that we have just studied shows that, in so far as conversions were concerned, the work of Paul and his company had been quite successful. Because Timothy and Silas were with Paul in the preaching at Thessalonica, and were with him when he wrote this letter, he associates them with himself in the writing of this letter. (1 Thess. 1:1.) It is thought that this letter was the first of Paul's letters which have come down to us. His writing the letter so soon after he had gone from Thessalonica shows how he felt for them in their hostile surroundings. They were young in their new life, and needed encouragement. He calls to their mind the shameful treatment he received at Philippi. This would encourage them to suffer also for the name of Christ. But this shameful treatment at Philippi did not deter him from preaching

Christ boldly at Thessalonica. Here also he preached "the gospel of God in much conflict." The leaders of the Jews, of course, contradicted his preaching, and sought to discredit all he preached. When they saw what great results attended the preaching of Paul and his company, they stirred up the riffraff of the town against them. (Acts 17:5-10.)

### **Paul Was Not a Flatterer, Nor Man Pleaser (Verses 3-6)**

His exhortation was not based on error; he did not preach false doctrine and exhort men to adhere to it. He presented no low, unclean motives to induce people to act, nor did he seek to ensnare them by any false promises. He and his helpers preached truth in a sincere effort to do the people good. He did nothing to enhance his own reputation as a successful gospel preacher. And, brother preacher, he is an example to us. He had been so approved of God as to be intrusted with the gospel. He felt his responsibility; he must deliver the message just as God delivered it to him. It was God's message, not his; and he must be a faithful messenger. If the gospel he preached did not please men, he was not to be blamed; yet many men became enraged at God's message and took their spite out on Paul. But Paul knew he had no right to tone down the message so as to please men. He and his helpers treated all men right, but he was not seeking to please them. "For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? or am I striving to please men? if I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ." (Gal. 1:10.) These men were seeking to please "God who proveth our hearts." God knows the heart of man, and he knows the ambitions and motives that prompt men to action. On this point all Christians, especially all preachers, should look carefully into their hearts and thoroughly scrutinize their motives. Why are you a Christian, or a professed Christian? What is the controlling motive in your preaching?

"Flattery is never sincere; it plays on self-love or vanity by artful or obsequious praise." To flatter is to lie. "But they flattered him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongue." (Psalm 78:36.) No man ever flattered another for the other's benefit. "A man that flattereth his neighbor spreadeth a net for his steps." (Prov. 29:5.) Know therefore that the flatterer means no good to you, but is seeking to use you. And so Paul and his company were not found using words of flattery. "Nor a cloak of covetousness." This must mean that their were not using a cloak to hide their covetousness, for covetousness is not a cloak for anything; but with flattery men hide their covetousness. They were not "seeking glory of men, neither from you nor from others."

### **"We Were Gentle in the Midst of You" (Verses 7-9)**

Paul was stern and unbending toward those who were seeking to pervert the gospel and disturb churches; but he was gentle toward those who were trying to do right and needed his help, "as when a nurse cherisheth her own children." Here was solicitude, kindness, helpfulness, and interested watchfulness. Love does not complain at the sacrifices made for the person loved, but rather rejoices at the opportunity and ability to be of service. Paul loved these Thessalonian brethren, and was therefore well pleased to impart the gospel

to them, and also his own soul—to serve them to the full extent of his powers. But nothing less than that is genuine love. In Acts 17:1-4 Luke mentions only three Sabbaths in which Paul preached at Thessalonica; but verse 9 of this part of our lesson seems plainly to indicate that he spent a much longer time there. It is true that Luke does not say that he left the city immediately after the third Sabbath; it is possible therefore that he spent many days preaching after he had to quit the synagogue. His laboring night and day, so as not to be a burden to them, would indicate a longer stay than two weeks. So also does the statement he made to the Philippians: "For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need." (Phil. 4:16.) This would not likely have been done had he remained there only two weeks.

### **The Blameless Behavior of Paul and His Company (Verses 10-12)**

"Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and righteously and unblameably we behaved ourselves toward you that believe." Paul would not have dared to say this had these brethren known of any wrong conduct on the part of Paul or any of his helpers. If only all preachers could say as much! Note the full significance of the three adverbs Paul uses—"holily and righteously and unblameably." Any Christian should be able to say that of his own conduct. Paul and his helpers were interested in the growth and development of these new converts, "as a father with his own children." Such unselfish devotion to the Lord and his church is too seldom seen these days; but that condition is not a new thing, for many in the days of the apostles were more interested in themselves than in others. When Paul was not laboring to supply the needs of him and his company, he was exhorting, and encouraging, and testifying. His whole effort was to so teach and train the brethren that they would be able to "walk worthily of God, who calleth you into his own kingdom and glory." They were now sons of God, and should behave as such. There was at Thessalonica, as elsewhere, a continuous calling people into the kingdom and glory; or, as some commentators have it—"called you into his glorious kingdom." "That they should, in every respect, act up to their high calling, so that it would not be a reproach to the God of holiness to acknowledge them as sons and daughters." Where love is, there is correct behavior; for love "doth not behave itself unseemly." "Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Pet. 2:11, 12.) "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.)

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

At Thessalonica, as at the other places mentioned in The Acts, the only power relied on by the preachers to convert sinners was the gospel of Christ, "for it is the power of God unto salvation." If a preacher now relies on anything else, he is not relying on God's saving power.

Some false notions are so fundamentally wrong that they com-

pletely hinder the acceptance of the truth. If a man believes in the absolute foreordination and predestination of all things, he cannot at the same time believe in the freedom of the human will. So long as the Jews held to the false notion, that Christ, when he came, would never die, they could not believe that the crucified Jesus was the Christ. For that reason Paul first attempted to remove that false notion. He could then convince some that Jesus was the Christ.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The difference between praise and flattery.  
The evils of flattery—how it hurts the character of the flatterer and the flattered.  
Why Paul was interested in people.

### QUESTIONS

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

**1 Thess 2:1, 2**

Discuss verses 1 and 2.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.

Name the first and the last converts Paul made in Philippi.

Tell the circumstances that caused Paul to be imprisoned.

Why did Paul demand that the authorities bring him out of the jail?

#### Verses 3-6

Discuss verse 3.

Discuss Paul's feeling of responsibility concerning his preaching.

What should be the controlling motive in preaching?

Give a discussion of flattery and its evils. How may men hide their covetousness?

#### Verses 1-4

What shows that Paul left one of his associates at Philippi?

Where did Paul usually preach first, and why?

What false notion did the Jews have about the Christ?

To what authority would Paul have to appeal to remove that notion?

Why do some false notions have to be removed before people can believe truth?

What results did the preaching at Thessalonica bring?

#### Verses 7-9

Discuss Paul's behavior at Thessalonica.

Discuss the difference between preaching to help others and to help the preacher.

How were Paul and his associates supported at Thessalonica?

#### Verses 10-12

Discuss verse 10.

Discuss also verses 11 and 12.

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VIII—May 21, 1944

### PAUL IN CORINTH

Acts 18:1-4; 1 Cor. 13

1 After these things he departed from Athens, and came to Corinth.

2 And he found a certain Jew named Aquila a man of Pontus by race. lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudias had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome: and he came unto them;

3 And because he was of the same trade, he abode with them, and they wrought; for by their trade they were tentmakers.

4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks.

1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal

2 And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

3 And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing.

4 Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,  
 5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account  
 of evil;

6 Rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth;

7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

8 Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there  
 be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away.

9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part;

10 But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.

11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am  
 become a man, I have put away childish things.

12 For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall  
 I know fully even as also I was fully known.

13 But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these  
 is love." (1 Cor. 13:13.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Psalm 133.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

May 15. M

May 16. T

May 17. W

May 18. T

May 19. F

May 20. S

May 21. S

Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:1-4)

Paul's Hymn of Love (1 Cor. 13:1-13)

Love in Daily Life (Col. 3:12-17)

Love for Our Neighbors (James 2:8-17)

Love to Christ (John 14:19-24)

Paul's Debt to All Men (Rom. 1:8-16)

God's Love for Us (Psalm 103:13-18)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—For Acts 18:1-4, probably A.D. 52; Paul's first letter to the church of God at Corinth  
 was written about A.D. 57.

*Places.*—Corinth; First Corinthians was written at Ephesus.

*Persons.*—Paul and the Corinthians.

*Lesson Links.*—Beginning where the first section of our last lesson left off, the student should  
 carefully read the remaining part of the seventeenth chapter. When the Jews at Thessalonica found  
 that they could not meet Paul's arguments, and that his preaching was gaining more attention than  
 they ever had, jealousy stirred deep in their hearts. They went out among the riffraff of that Gentile  
 city, and stirred up a mob, meaning to have Paul killed. They went to the worst element of those they  
 considered as "Gentile dogs," to get them to do their killing. And, of course, after mixing with  
 unclean Gentiles, and with murder in their hearts, they returned home and took a bath to cleanse  
 themselves from defilement of the flesh! The mob did not find Paul and his helpers. The brethren  
 then sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Beroea; "who when they were come thither went into  
 the synagogue of the Jews. Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they  
 received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things  
 were so. Many of them therefore believed." Their searching the scriptures showed them that what  
 Paul was preaching was exactly what the prophets had foretold, and this caused them to believe the  
 gospel which he preached. And yet we are told by some speculators that the prophets did not foretell  
 the scheme of redemption preached by the apostles, but only of the restoring of the old

Jewish kingdom. If that were so, examining the scriptures could not have led the Beroeans to believe that Paul was preaching the truth. Rather, they would have said, "Well, we have examined the scriptures, and find that Paul is not preaching what was foretold by the prophets. We cannot therefore accept his preaching." But Paul's labors were interrupted by enemies who came down from Thessalonica to Beroea, "stirring up and troubling the multitudes. And then immediately the brethren sent forth Paul to go as far as to the sea." He then probably went by ship to Athens. There "his spirit was provoked within him as he beheld the city full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with them that met him." Usually he first spent some time preaching in the synagogue, but a city full of idols so stirred him that he began at once to preach to the Gentiles in the market place every day. "And certain also of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him." They took him to the Areopagus to enquire into this strange doctrine he was preaching. Here Paul made a great speech, but apparently did not accomplish much. No city needed the gospel more than did Athens, but that field was not ripe for harvest.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### Paul at Corinth (Verses 1-4)

Corinth lies almost due west of Athens; the distance between them is about forty-five miles. Corinth, like Athens, was a famous city—it was wealthy and corrupt. Here a narrow isthmus connected the two parts of Greece. "In consequence of its geographical position it formed the most direct communication between the Ionian and Aegean seas." It had a port on each side of the isthmus, and much shipping was transported across from one port to the other, and it was on a line of all north and south traffic. It was therefore a great radiating center for a strong church. Here Paul would remain longer than he usually remained at a place, in order to plant and nourish such a church. He labored much with his hands to supply the needs of himself and of his helpers. "And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of Pontus by race, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla .... and because he was of the same tribe, he abode with them, and they wrought; for by their trade they were tent-makers." Pontus was a territory in the northeastern part of Asia Minor bordering on the Black Sea. Aquila and his wife Priscilla had lately been driven out of Rome by order of the Emperor Claudius. Whether or not they were Christians when Paul first met them we are not told. Likely they were not, but the three were drawn together because they were of the same trade. They were, however, active Christians soon after they were associated with Paul. Here as elsewhere Paul "reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks." The Greeks here mentioned were Greeks who attended the synagogue. But in studying this section the student should not stop with the printed text in our lesson. That does not give any of the results of Paul's work at Corinth.

It seems that Paul went to Corinth alone, and perhaps felt the need of help. "But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ." In the very nature of the case that had to be



the burden of the preaching in all places where there were no believers in Jesus as the Christ. But these Jews not only opposed Paul's preaching, but they blasphemed; and this means that they blasphemed the name of Jesus the Christ. These were moved by the same spirit that had prompted the leaders of the Jews in Jerusalem. Nothing could be accomplished by preaching any more to these Jews; and so Paul "shook out his raiment and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." These Jews had completely shut the door of salvation against themselves. But in spite of this bitter opposition, "Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue believed in the Lord with all his house." But the great part of the converts in that city were Gentiles. "Many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."

### **Love Greater Than Spiritual Gifts (1 Cor. 13:1-3)**

The last verse of the preceding chapter really connects with verse 1. In fact the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters go together, for in all of them Paul is discussing spiritual gifts. The church at Corinth was richly endowed with spiritual gifts, and some seem to have sought to make a display of their gifts. If they used these gifts to benefit others, it was commendable to desire them; yet, even so, there was something more important. If a man could speak all the languages of men, he would be a great linguist, but he would not necessarily be a great man. In addition to that, if he could speak the language of the heavenly hosts, and had not love, he would be just a noise in the world—sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. Paul rates prophecy above the other spiritual gifts. (1 Cor. 14:1-5.) And yet if a man had the gift of prophecy, and if he knew all that there is to be known, and if he had the gift of miracle-working faith so that he could remove mountains, he would be a wonder in this world, and men would call him great; yet if he had not love he would be nothing—not worth considering. No amount of giving, and no amount of bodily sacrifice, is of any profit without love.

### **What Love Does and Does Not (Verses 4-7)**

Some things cannot be fully defined. Try to define light, life, love. Paul does not try to define love; he tells us what it does and what it does not do. Instead of telling us what it is, he tells us how it acts. The scientist cannot define electricity, but he can tell us some of the things it does. Some writers think the word "charity" is a better translation of the word Paul used. No other man exemplified love in his life better than did Paul. "Love suffereth long, and is kind." Because Paul loved God and man, he suffered much in carrying the gospel of salvation to man. (2 Cor. 11:23-28.) We are long-suffering and kind toward those we love. Paul denounced in no uncertain language those who would pervert the gospel of Christ, but he was kind to those who were trying to live right. "Love envieth not." There is no resentful begrudging, no disappointed feeling, at the good fortune of those we love. Envy grows out of selfishness; love is generous, unselfish. "Love vaunteth not itself." Love does not overrate itself; it does not try to appear better, wiser, or greater than it really is. The man who loves never parades himself, giving out that he is some great personage. "Is not puffed

up." It is void of conceit—does not try to tower above others, either in learning, piety, or devotion to the Lord. "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him." (Prov. 26:12.) "Doth not behave itself unseemly." A puffed-up, conceited, person does behave himself unseemly. Love regulates one's bearings toward others. Love regulates one's manners and makes him deferential and considerate—never rude and unbecoming in conduct. "Seeketh not its own." To sacrifice the truth to please another, no matter how much you think you love him, is not an act of love; but love does not seek to have its way about personal matters or matters of opinion; it will yield anything except truth and right. Certainly love for God and man does not hinder a man from seeking his own salvation, no matter how many his actions displease. "Is not provoked." This must be taken in a limited sense, for Paul's spirit was provoked within him. (Acts 17:16.) Even Jehovah is provoked with hardened sinners. (Deut. 9:8, and many other references.) But love does not provoke a person to retaliate; it restrains him. And if a person you love does you an evil, you try to pass it by. Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness—does not so much as rejoice in the unrighteousness of an enemy that destroys his influence. It does not rejoice in any unrighteous conduct. It deplors all unrighteous deeds, no matter by whom committed; it rejoices in the truth, no matter who propagates it. Paul's life as a preacher of the gospel shows how love beareth all things. But the statement that love believeth all things does not mean that it believes everything. "Beloved, believe not every spirit." (1 John 4:1.) But if a man loves God, he will believe all that God says, and hopes for all he promises.

### **Faith, Hope, and Love Abide (Verses 8-13)**

"Love never faileth"; but spiritual gifts were to be done away. Tongues would cease; that is, the miraculous ability to speak in tongues would cease. All prophecies would be done away. Miraculous knowledge would come to an end. "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part." That cannot refer, as some commentators think, to all time here in this world, for we do not now prophesy in part, nor at all. No miraculously endowed person knew all truth at any one time, nor did any prophet prophesy all truth at once, but only a part at a time. A little reflection will show anyone that the whole revelation of God's will was given only a part at a time. "But when that which is perfect is come," when the revelation of God's plans and purposes is fully revealed—the perfect will of God is made known—"that which is in part shall be done away." There would then be no need for a supernatural gift of knowledge, no need for additional prophecies. In making known the gospel spiritual gifts were absolutely necessary—without them no man could know the things of God. Eye could not see, neither could the ear hear, without these spiritual gifts. When Paul, in an earlier part of this epistle, quoted Isaiah to the effect that man's unaided eye had not seen nor his ear heard, he was not talking about conditions that prevail now, but the conditions before a revelation was made, for he immediately adds, "But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit." (1 Cor. 2:10.)

Paul's illustration in verse 11 is very clear, and it seems to mean that when revelation reached its full growth, then the knowing in

part and prophesying in part would be put away. James compares looking into the gospel with looking into a mirror. When people used polished metal for mirrors, they saw only darkly; but when the perfect revelation was made, then the reflection of your face would be perfect, as if you were standing face to face with yourself. By studying the Bible diligently any man of intelligence can come to know himself fully—in it he can see a perfect reflection of himself. "But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love." ,Why is love greater than faith or hope? Without faith no one can be saved, and without hope we would give up in despair; and yet love is greater here and now. Think of the prompting power of love. Think of the many weary hours love will spend at the bedside of one who is desperately sick; you have no faith in their recovery and you have no hope of being rewarded by the sick person; yet when both faith and hope fail love keeps you watchful and alert. Parents may lose faith in a child that has gone completely bad, and they may lose hope that he will ever turn from his corruption, but love will follow him even to the gallows, and to a felon's grave. "Love never faileth." Love pursues the wayward when there is no apparent ground for either faith or hope, and sometimes recovers the wayward. Love holds on, never fails, never gives up, and sacrifices to the limit. Do not say that love is greater because it will continue in heaven; that underrates love. It is greater now.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Paul began his work at Corinth without any help. He would do none of the baptizing when his helpers were with him; for anyone could do the baptizing, but only an inspired man could preach—proclaim—the gospel. This accounts for his baptizing only a few at Corinth. (1 Cor. 1:14-16.) Stephanas, one of the few he baptized, was the first fruit of his labors in that city. This favors the idea that he baptized the converts he made before Silas and Timothy arrived. (Acts 18:5.) Instead of Paul's language discrediting baptism, it shows that he considered it too important to be delayed until his helpers arrived.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Paul's work at Corinth.  
The church at Corinth.  
Spiritual gifts.  
Why spiritual gifts ceased.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Tell about the mob at Thessalonica.  
Tell about Paul's labors at Beroea, also at Athens.

#### Verses 1-4

Give some description of Corinth.  
What two persons did Paul meet at Corinth?  
From what city had these people come, and why?  
What drew them together?

Where did Paul begin preaching?  
Who came to his assistance?  
Why did he turn to the Gentiles?

#### 1 Cor. 13:1-3

What was Paul discussing in chapters 12, 13, and 14?  
Tell how he emphasized the greatness of love.

#### Verses 4-7

How did Paul show his love?  
Let students in turn discuss each thing love does and does not.

**Verses 8-13**

What did Paul say would cease?  
 When would they cease?  
 Why were spiritual gifts necessary?

Discuss Paul's illustration in verse 11.  
 What three things abide?  
 Why is love greater than faith or hope?  
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IX—May 28, 1944

**PAUL ENCOURAGES THE CORINTHIANS**

2 Cor. 4:5, 16-18; 5:1, 5-8, 14-19

5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

16 Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day.

17 For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory;

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

1 For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens.

5 Now he that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

6 Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight);

8 We are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord.

14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died;

15 And he died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again.

16 Wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh: even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more.

17 Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new.

18 But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation;

19 To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich." (2 Cor. 8:9.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—John 15:7-17.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

May 22. M

May 23. T

May 24. W

May 25. T

May 26. F

May 27. S

May 28. S

Living for Eternity (2 Cor. 4:16 to 5:8)

New Creatures in Christ (2 Cor. 5:14-19)

Keeping the Commandments (1 Tim. 6:11-14)

The Grace of Liberality (2 Cor. 8:1-15)

Living to the Glory of God (Eph. 3:14-19)

Spiritual Freedom (Rom. 8:1-4, 12-18)

Suffering as a Christian (1 Pet. 4:8-19)

**LESSON SETTINGS**

*Time.*—A.D. 57 or 58.

*Place.*—Apparently somewhere in Macedonia.

*Persons.*—Paul and the saints in Corinth.

*Lesson Links.*—In this second epistle to the Corinthians Paul associates Timothy with him in the signature: "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints that are in the whole of Achaia." (2 Cor. 1:1.) Not long after the church at Corinth was established, disturbers had gone there and destroyed the peace of the church. The first letter rebuked them for a number of evil practices that had sprung up among them; then he waited in anxiety to learn the effects of that letter. In his anxiety he sent Titus to acquaint himself with conditions, and report to Paul. (2 Cor. 7:6, 13, 14; 8:6; 12:18.) The tone of this second letter shows that Paul was well pleased with the report Titus brought back. "Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying on your behalf: I am filled with comfort, I overflow with joy in all our affliction." (2 Cor. 7:4.) But some did not repent, and Paul warned them of a coming visit—"lest again when I come my God should humble me before you, and I should mourn for many of them that have sinned heretofore, and repented not of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they committed." "This is the third time I am coming to you. At the mouth of two witnesses or three shall every word be established. I have said beforehand, and I do say beforehand, as when I was present the second time, so now, being absent, to them that have sinned heretofore, and to all the rest, that, if I come again, I will not spare; seeing that ye seek a proof of Christ that speaketh in me." (2 Cor. 12:21; 13:1-3.) "For this cause I write these things while absent, that I may not when present deal sharply, according to the authority which the Lord gave me for building up, and not for casting down." (2 Cor. 13:10.) Just what proof he would give that Christ spoke in him, and what measures he would take in dealing sharply with them, we are not informed; but when we remember what happened to Ananias and Sapphira in the presence of Peter (Acts 5:1-11), and what Paul did to Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 13:6-12), it gives rise to the idea that Paul meant some like drastic actions. It seems plain that some of his Judaizing enemies were still in Corinth, seeking to discredit Paul and stir up trouble—at least one such. "Let such a one reckon this, that, what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such are we also in deed when we are present." (2 Cor. 10:11.) But it seems that the great majority of the church were conducting themselves in a way that pleased Paul; for that he rejoiced.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Christ Jesus Is Lord (Verse 5)

Let us paraphrase this verse as follows: We preach not ourselves as Lord, but we preach Christ Jesus as Lord, and we preach ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. In many places and in various ways Christ Jesus is set forth as Lord. He has all authority. (Matt. 28:18.) God raised Christ 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

fillet all in all." (Eph. 1:20-23.) "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.) The movements of any healthy body is controlled by the head; the head is supreme in authority. As the church is the kingdom of Christ, he is the king. (Matt. 16:18, 19.) The New Testament is not the constitution of that kingdom; it is made up of the decrees of our absolute monarch. He is supreme over all, and none of his edicts can be changed at the pleasure of any of his subjects. He is Lord, and we are only his servants.

### **Things Temporal and Things Eternal (Verses 16-18)**

In the midst of persecutions, trials, and afflictions the Christian does not faint, does not fall by the wayside. His body is temporal; it decays even while we live, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. But there must be proper food and exercise, or there can be no growth. The food for the renewal of the inner man is the word of God, and the exercise is Christian living. Paul suffered much, all of us suffer some, and many are never entirely free from suffering. And some of the worst of our sufferings are the sorrows that come upon us. But Paul's way of looking at matters makes afflictions easier to bear, makes the afflictions seem lighter. "For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward." (Rom. 8:18.) When the reward far exceeds the suffering, the suffering is not so hard to bear. Any task or suffering is big or little in proportion to the expected reward. To work a whole day for five cents would be intolerable; to work a whole day for five hundred dollars would be a delight. The word "look" in verse 18 means more than just to gaze at a thing. On the word translated "look," Macknight says, "The word 'skopein' properly signifies 'to look at a mark' which we intend to hit; consequently 'to endeavor to obtain.'" Bloomfield has, "Keep our minds upon." We do not have our minds set upon obtaining the things that are seen, all of which are material, perishable things. This eighteenth verse is a form of expression in which the less important is denied in contrast with the more important. It does not mean that we must not seek to obtain enough of the temporal, perishable things to keep us alive, but that there is something more important—the eternal things. All earthly things perish, but there are blessings that are eternal. Even when we seek to obtain things to sustain this life we must be seeking to obtain the eternal rewards. We need to realize that, in seeking to obtain the necessities of this life, we should so conduct ourselves as to strengthen the inner man and lay up rewards in heaven. Greed for gain hampers spiritual progress and shuts the gates of eternal glory against us.

### **(2 Cor. 5:1)**

"For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens." This verse presents some difficulties to anyone who gives it a close study. The common idea is that "the earthly house of our tabernacle" is our physical body, and that the

"building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens," is our resurrection body; but that view seems to make Paul's contrast obscure. Of our earthly body and our resurrection body Paul says, "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." (1 Cor. 15:44.) Can this body of the resurrection be referred to as a "building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens"? "A house not made with hands" is set over in contrast with "the earthly house of our tabernacle," plainly suggesting that the house we now live in is made with hands. This seems to bear out the contention made by Macknight that Paul is here contrasting our present habitation with our eternal abiding place. If it be said that our resurrection body will be "a building from God, not made with hands," because God will prepare that body; so also could our physical body, for the same reason, be called a "building from God, a house not made with hands." But there are difficulties either way you look at it. However, none of these things should trouble us; for here our natural body dwells in a temporal house, and over there our resurrection body will dwell in the place not made with hands which Jesus has gone to prepare for us in his Father's house of many mansions.

### **"Always of Good Courage" (Verses 5-8)**

"Now he that wrought us for this very thing is God." For what very thing? "That what is mortal may be swallowed up of life." (Verse 4.) Hence God made us to be Christians, that we might have life with him. "Who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit." Gave us the Spirit as an earnest. What is an earnest? "Something of value given by a buyer to a seller, to bind the bargain. A token of what is to come; pledge." It is something given as a pledge that the giver will carry out his part of the transaction. If both parties are willing, the holder of the earnest may return it to the giver, and call off the trade. Even though we now groan under burdens, having this earnest of the Spirit, we are "therefore always of good courage," though we are absent from the Lord while we are here in the body. For the word "sight" in verse, 7 use the word "appearance." You will notice that the translators say that the Greek word means "appearance." "We walk by faith, and not by appearance." We do not do what seems right to us; we do not allow the appearance of things to turn us from the path of faith. God does not deceive; appearances do. To walk by appearance is to leave God out of consideration; it is to ignore Jesus as our Lord and our Savior. No matter how right any course of conduct may seem to be, if it is not the way of faith, we should not dare God by following it. And yet in religion so many people go by appearance, instead of going by faith. Paul speaks of the willingness to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord. In the conception of materialists there is nothing about man to be absent from the body, or to be at home in the body. Paul was not a materialist; with him the body was not a house with no inhabitant—nobody at home.

### **A New Creature in Christ (Verses 14-19)**

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and there be judged according to what we have done. (Verse 10.) "Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men." (Verse 11.) The

love of Christ may be the love he has for us or our love for him; here it seems to refer to the love we have for him. The word constrain has a number of meanings. None of the definitions given by Liddell and Scott of the Greek word carries the ideal of impelling or urging to action, except in the idea of holding rowers together to get them to pull together. In the matter of boasting or overenthusiasm the love of Christ constrained Paul. There are no grounds for being boastful; "because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died." Christ died for all, because all had died—were dead in trespasses and sins. We had to be redeemed from death in sin and death in the grave, or all was lost. We have nothing to boast about—nothing to glory over. "That they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again." Paul made a similar statement in Rom. 14:7, 8, but the force of it is so often destroyed by making Paul's language mean that we live unto one another. Notice the language: "For none of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." Because Christ died for all, then all should live unto him. As he died for all, there is no race distinction in his plans; all flesh distinctions are obliterated. We therefore now know no man after the flesh, as the proud Jew did. While Jesus walked in the flesh, he was known after the flesh as a Jew; we do not now know him after the flesh—we do not think of him as a Jew, but as a Savior for all races. For this reason any man, whether Jew or Gentile, if he is in Christ, is a new creature—a new creation. The old things—the old distinctions, the old religion that made such distinctions—are passed away. Christianity is a new religion, and its adherents are new creatures, new men. But all these things are of God. The people had gone away from God, but God's plan was the reconciling of men to himself through Christ. He is the only mediator, and therefore we can be reconciled through none other. And yet God uses agents to bring about this reconciliation through Christ. The plan of reconciliation had to be made known—made available—to man. Christ had to be made known as the Savior, the mediator; and it had to be made known to men how they might avail themselves of his gracious mediation. For that purpose God chose certain men, and gave to them the ministry, or work, of reconciliation. These men could not force a reconciliation; they had to use other means than force. And so God committed to them the word of reconciliation—the word by which reconciliation should be effected. (Verse 19.) Because of this work committed to the apostles, they became God's ambassadors, acting on behalf of Christ; and through them even now God entreats people to be reconciled to him. (Verse 20.)

### SOME REFLECTIONS

In his writings Paul makes no arguments to prove that man has a spirit that survives the death of the body. He writes as if that was a truth well known and recognized as fundamental. The fact that he so writes is as weighty an argument in proof that a man has such a spirit as could be made. That is a truth that Paul had always accepted, even before he was converted to Christ. In his day there were two main sects of the Jews, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisee believed in angels, spirits, and the resurrection. The



Sadducees believed neither; they were materialists. On these points of difference between the two sects, Paul held with the Pharisees; he was not in any sense a materialist. (Acts 23:8.) That fact alone should convince any man who has regard for the truth of God.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Does man's spirit survive the death of the body?  
 We walk by faith, not by appearance.  
 What is an ambassador, and who were the Lord's ambassadors?

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
 Why did Paul's first letter to the Corinthians contain many sharp rebukes?  
 What effect did the letter have?  
 What did he say of those who did not repent?

#### Verse 5

Discuss the authority of Jesus the Christ.

#### Verses 16-18

What does Paul mean by the terms "outward man" and "inward man"?  
 What comparison does he make between them?  
 Discuss verse 17.  
 Discuss verse 18.

#### 2 Cor. 5:1

The class should discuss verse 1.

#### Verses 7-8

God wrought us for what?  
 Discuss the phrase "the earnest of the Spirit."  
 Discuss verse 7.  
 Discuss verse 8.

#### Verses 14-19

Give summary of verses 10 and 11.  
 What is the love of Christ, and how does it constrain us?  
 Discuss verse 14.  
 To whom does the Christian live?  
 Compare the latter part of verse 15 with Rom. 14:7, 8.  
 What does Paul mean by knowing no man after the flesh?  
 Discuss verse 17.  
 Discuss God's plan of reconciliation.  
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson X—June 4, 1944

### PAUL IN EPHESUS

Acts 19:8-10; Eph. 2:4-10; 3:14-19

8 And he entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the kingdom of God.

9 But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.

10 And this continued for the space of two years; so that all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

4 But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5 Even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved),

6 And raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus:

7 That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus:

8 For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

9 Not of works, that no man should glory.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.

14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father,

15 From whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,

16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man;

17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 May be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

19 And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:10.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Eph. 4:11-16.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

May 29. M

Ephesian Disciples Empowered (Acts 19:1-7)

May 30. T

Paul Reasons and Persuades (Acts 19:8-20)

May 31. W

Business Men in a Riot (Acts 19:23-32)

June 1. T

The Riot Quelled (Acts 19:33-41)

June 2. F

God's Grace Exemplified (Eph. 2:1-10)

June 3. S

Strengthened by God's Power (Eph. 3:14-19)

June 4. S

"The Work of Our Hands" (Psalm 90:12-17)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Paul began his labors at Ephesus about A.D. 54; the letter to the Ephesians was written about A.D. 62.

*Places.*—Ephesus; the letter to the Ephesians was written at Rome.

*Persons.*—Paul and the people of Ephesus. There were many Jews in Ephesus, but the great body of the people were Greeks.

*Lesson Links.*—After Paul's lengthy and fruitful stay at Corinth, he "took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila." (Acts 18:18.) It seems therefore that he left Silas and Timothy at Corinth, but they later came to him at Ephesus. (Acts 19:22.) On his way from Corinth Paul stopped off at Ephesus for a short visit; here he left Priscilla and Aquila, and proceeded on his journey. "And when he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and saluted the church, and went down to Antioch." While it is not stated in so many words that Paul went up to Jerusalem, it does say that he went down to Antioch. Now, if he had gone from the ship up into the city of Caesarea, it could not have been said that he then went down to Antioch, for Antioch is on a little higher ground than is Caesarea, being a little farther from the coast than Caesarea; but from Jerusalem to Antioch is a downgrade journey. The Bible is very exact in the use of terms. "And having spent some time there, he departed, and went through the region of Galatia, and Phrygia, in order, establishing all the disciples." It does not seem that he tarried long this time at Antioch. During the time Paul was making this circuit, "a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John: and he began to speak boldly in the synagogue." How much, if any, he knew of the personal ministry of Jesus we are not told. There is nothing in the language to forbid the possibility that he knew of the death and resurrection of Jesus, but he knew nothing of the baptism commanded by Jesus in the Great Commission. Con-

cerning baptism, he knew only the baptism of John. "But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more accurately." They took him to their abiding place, so that they might teach him quietly. He went over into Achaia before Paul arrived at Ephesus.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### **Paul Preaches in the Synagogue at Ephesus (Verses 8-10)**

"And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples." By questioning these disciples Paul found that they were not disciples of Christ, but of John's preaching, though it is not likely that they had ever seen John. It seems almost certain that these disciples had been baptized unto John's baptism after it had been superseded by baptism in the name of Christ, for we can hardly think that all the people John baptized had to be baptized again. If so, what purpose did that baptism serve? Paul gave these men the teaching they needed. "And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus." Paul must have met up with these disciples immediately after arriving in Ephesus; for it seems that he had not yet gone to the synagogue.

"And he entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the kingdom of God." Our word "dialogue" is the anglicized form of the Greek word here translated "reasoning"—Paul dialogued with them. He held conversations with them, or he and they alternated in making speeches. It was what we would now call a discussion or debate. The subject of the discussions was "the things concerning the kingdom of God." On the kingdom question Paul and the Jews did not agree. The Jews looked for a world kingdom, a religio-political kingdom, with the Messiah on the throne in Jerusalem, the Jews the citizens, and all other nations as subjects. That was the notion that was being advocated all over the land. Had Paul agreed with them, there would have been no debate. Certainly if Paul had preached the sort of a kingdom they expected, they would have accepted his preaching, and would not have become "hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude." When they became bitter and slanderous in their speaking, "he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. The gospel stirs men either to obedience or to antagonism. An honest and good heart accepts the word of God; others harden their hearts against it. (Matt. 13:14, 15; Luke 8:15.) As long as the Jews in the synagogue were content to argue with Paul, he was content to meet with them and argue with them; but when they left off argument because they could not meet his arguments, and resorted to speaking evil of the Way, he was through with them. To preach to them any more was to cast pearls before swine. It was good for the disciples to be separated from such a rebellious and blasphemous crowd; it also would show the disciples and the people of Ephesus that Judaism and Christianity were two separate systems of religion—that Christianity was not just another sect of the Jews' religion. It seems that he found congenial surroundings in the school of Tyrannus. If any of the Jews were friendly to his preaching, they could hear him in this school. He

continued his teaching in the school for the space of two years; "so that all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks." What was then called Asia was a strip of country along the western coast of what we now know as Asia Minor. The language does not necessarily mean that Paul in person preached all over that territory; in fact, he could not have done so while reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. Paul had a number of helpers. There were Priscilla and Aquila, Gaius and Aristarchus, and Silas and Timothy, and perhaps others. As an apostle of the Lord Paul was directing the labors of his helpers. We cannot think that these helpers were idle during the two years Paul spent preaching the gospel in the school of Tyrannus. His helpers could evangelize the territory of Asia during the two years, so that all Asia would hear the word of the Lord. To get a full account of Paul's labors in Ephesus the student must read on through the first verse of the twentieth chapter.

### **The Richness of God's Mercy (Eph. 2:4-7)**

Through his chosen representatives God set up churches in central places, to act as radiating centers; and because these strong churches in central cities would exercise great influence over the smaller churches in the surrounding territory—be more or less models for such churches—it was the more important that these larger churches be well taught and trained; hence the importance of the letters to the larger churches. Copies of these letters would be distributed to the surrounding churches. There was also an exchange of letters. "And when this epistle hath been read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye also read the epistle from Laodicea." (Col. 4:16.)

Mercy is kind or compassionate treatment of the needy, the distressed, and afflicted. God was rich in mercy to the helpless and condemned sinner. The sinner could not make any plan by which he could remedy his condition. But God was merciful to sinners, and this mercy was prompted by God's love. "His great love wherewith he loved us" is a superlative expression; his love was superlative, "even when we were dead through our trespasses"; and because of his love and mercy he "made us alive together with Christ." The sinner had done nothing, and could do nothing, to merit God's love. Any benefit or blessing bestowed on the sinner was an act of pure favor. "By grace have ye been saved." Though we were dead through our trespasses God "made us alive together with Christ, . . . and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places." These heavenly places are in Christ, in his body, the church. The exceeding riches of God's grace in kindness in saving even some who had a part in the crucifixion of Jesus and others who, like Paul, had persecuted the church would be made known all down the ages. No such mercy and grace had ever before been made manifest to man. It would give hope to any sinner that he also might share in the blessings of God's grace.

### **Saved by Grace Through Faith (Verses 8-10)**

Grace is favor. God's grace or favor comes to us in every benefit or blessing extended to us. The life of Christ, his death and resurrection, the church, and the Bible, including his commands, all are by grace. His grace is in the commands he has given us; for in

these commands he points out to us the way of life, and that is a favor that cannot be measured. They are God's highway signs which he has put up to guide us along the right way. The one who tries to separate God's grace from his commands has a poor conception of the extent Of grace, and evidently considers the commands of no benefit. "By grace have ye been saved through faith." Grace is God's part; faith is our part. Grace brings salvation within our reach; faith lays hold on it. But faith only—dead faith—never lays hold on anything. And this salvation—this whole plan of salvation—is not of ourselves. We could neither have conceived it nor brought it into being; it is God's gift of grace. No matter how much a sinner does he cannot merit pardon; pardon is not based on merit; pardon is always and everywhere a matter of grace. Obedience to the gospel does not merit salvation, and there is nothing in such obedience to give any sinner grounds for glorying; but there is humiliation in that we have to trust another for pardon, and submit to his authority to obtain it. In addition to a man's own salvation, God had another purpose in calling him into his service, namely, that he might do good to others. These good works were prepared beforehand; before giving this plan of salvation God had in mind the good works he expected his servants to do.

### **Paul Prays for Them (Eph. 3:14-19)**

To bow the knee to another, even when the expression is figurative, is to recognize his authority; but Paul was not too proud to bow his knee to God. For "every family," the King James version has, "the whole family," and so does Macknight. Paul's petitions begin with verse 16; the prayer is so sublime and so far-reaching in its sweep that one hesitates to make any comments on it. Paul's first petition for them is, "that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man." Every Christian today needs just such strengthening, and should pray for it. Our inward man needs to grow in strength. And Paul prays for all the things in his prayer, that God would grant them according to the riches of his glory. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." We can accept that petition just as it reads, without any speculation as to how it is to be done, and leave the answering of it to God. But there is a certain end to be accomplished in the granting of this petition—"to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong .... " To be rooted and grounded is to be firmly established, firmly fixed, in the principles of the faith and love for God and man. Strong to apprehend lay firm hold on with the understanding. And herein has always been a serious defect in God's people. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." (Isa. 1:3.) "Therefore my people are gone into captivity for lack of knowledge." (Isa. 5:13.) Only those who understand the word can bear much fruit. (Matt. 13:23.) "The breadth and length and height and depth," Macknight thinks this refers to the church as a building; Meyer thinks it appears to the love of Christ. But it seems that the terms would more fitly apply to a building than to love. The love of Christ is mentioned in the next verse as' an additional matter. But how can we know the love of Christ which passeth understanding? We cannot fully know it, but we can know that he loved us enough to die for us—so loved us while we were yet sinners. To this extent

we must know the love of Christ, that we "may be filled unto all the fulness of God." And then came what would now be thought of as .the benediction: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen." (Eph. 3:20, 21.) And that also should be a great inducement to people to pray. Instead of talking about what God can do and cannot do in answer to prayer, meditate on the statement of Paul that God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

### SOME REFLECTIONS

It seems impossible for some theologians to understand that conditions performed to obtain pardon cannot, in the very nature of things, be works of merit; and equally hard for them to understand that performing conditions to obtain pardon does not give anyone grounds for glorying. The phrase "not of works," is often used against baptism as a condition of pardon. Yet not one will say that baptism is a work of merit, or that it gives any ground for boasting. In baptism the candidate must surrender himself up completely into the hands of 'another and be buried. The candidate himself does nothing—he is entirely passive while the Lord through the administrator baptizes him. Being baptized is not therefore a work which the one baptized does.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Paul's work at Ephesus.  
Salvation by grace through faith.  
Why cannot a sinner perform any works that merit salvation?  
Eph. 3:20, 21.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Give Paul's circuit from Corinth by Ephesus and back to Ephesus.  
Tell about Apollos.

#### Verses 8-10

Tell about the twelve disciples Paul met when he reached Ephesus.  
Tell about Paul's preaching in the synagogue, and why he moved from there.  
What did Paul and the Jews argue about, and why did they disagree?  
Tell about his preaching in the school of Tyrannus.  
Who were Paul's helpers?

#### Eph. 2:4-7

Why was it important to have strong churches in

central places?

What is mercy, and what prompted God's mercy?  
Why cannot a sinner do anything to merit God's mercy and love?

#### Verses 8-10

What is grace, and in what ways is it manifested to us?  
Discuss salvation by grace through faith.  
What is it that is not of ourselves?  
What works would give grounds for boasting?  
Discuss verse 10.

#### Eph. 3:14-19

Give the separate petitions in Paul's prayer.  
What is it to be rooted and grounded?  
What has always been a serious defect in God's people?  
What is said of the love of Christ?  
Discuss verses 20, 21.  
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XI—June 11, 1944  
**PAUL PLEADS FOR A RUNAWAY SLAVE**  
 Phile. 4-21

4 I thank my God always, making mention of thee in my prayers,  
 5 Hearing of thy love, and of the faith which thou has toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all the saints;  
 6 That the fellowship of thy faith may become effectual, in the knowledge of every good thing which is in you, unto Christ.  
 7 For I had much joy and comfort in thy love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through thee, brother.  
 8 Wherefore, though I have all boldness in Christ to enjoin thee that which is befitting,  
 9 Yet for love's sake I rather beseech, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now a prisoner also of Christ Jesus:  
 10 I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus,  
 11 Who once was unprofitable to thee, but now is profitable to thee and to me:  
 12 Whom I have sent back to thee in his own person, that is, my very heart:  
 13 Whom I would fain have kept with me, that in thy behalf he might minister unto me in the bonds of the gospel:  
 14 But without thy mind I would do nothing; that thy goodness should not be as of necessity, but of free will.  
 15 For perhaps he was therefore parted from thee for a season, that thou shouldest have him for ever;  
 16 No longer as a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord.  
 17 If then thou countest me a partner, receive him as myself.  
 18 But if he hath wronged thee at all, or oweth thee aught, put that to mine account;  
 19 I Paul write it with mine own hand, I will repay it: that I say not unto thee that thou owest to me even thine own self besides.  
 20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my heart in Christ.  
 21 Having confidence in thine obedience I write unto thee, knowing that thou wilt do even beyond what I say.

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

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Psalm 67.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

June 5.	M		Greetings to Fellow Workers (Phile. 1-3)
June 6.	T		Recognition of a Friend's Service (Phile. 4-7)
June 7.	W		A Plea for Magnanimity (Phile. 8-22)
June 8.	T		Two Brothers Reconciled (Gen. 33:1-17)
June 9.	F		Joseph Forgives His Brothers (Gen. 45:1-13)
June 10.	S		Jonathan Pleads for His Friend (1 Sam. 20:27-33)
June 11.	S		"Forgiving Each Other" (Eph. 4:31 to 5:2)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—A.D. 63 or 64.

*Place.*—Paul was a prisoner at Rome when he wrote the letter.

*Persons.*—"Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved and fellow-worker, and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy house." (Verses 1, 2.)

*Lesson Links.*—No one knows when men first began to reduce a fellow man to involuntary servitude, but it likely began by using captives in war as slaves. Slavery was widespread in Paul's day,

though there is no proof that slavery existed among the Jews at that time. God's inspired men did not consider it an unpardonable sin. They did not advocate, nor defend, slavery; they did not demand that masters set their slaves free. They depended on instilling into the hearts of men and women principles which would correct this, as well as many another evil. This would be more effectual than any demand they could have made. People have to be lifted out of some practices by degrees, and teaching is the only method that will bring about willing reforms. Gospel preachers taught masters how to treat their slaves, and slaves how to behave toward their masters. Concerning Abraham it is said that "he had sheep, and oxen, and he-asses, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and she-asses, and camels." (Gen. 12:16.) Other places mention the servants of Abraham. His servants were his family, at least, a part of his family. Hagar was Sarai's handmaid. (Gen. 16:1.) This Hagar was not a freewoman. (Gal. 4:21, 22.) Abraham had some servants that were bought with his money. (Gen. 17:12, 13.) In the last of the ten commandments such are rated as property. No man was allowed to steal a man, and sell him as a slave. (Ex. 21:16.) That is what Joseph's brothers did to him; in reality they stole him from his father, and sold him into slavery. (Gen. 37:18-36.) Under the law of Moses their crime would have been punishable by death. But in that case as well as in the case of Onesimus, everything was overruled for the best. But the law of Moses prohibited the cruel treatment of slaves. (Ex. 21:20, 21.) If a master destroyed the eye of his maidservant or his manservant, he had to set the servant free, and the same was true if he knocked out a tooth. (Ex. 21:26, 27.) A Hebrew could not by another Hebrew be kept in servitude more than six years—"the seventh he shall go out free for nothing." If his master during the six years gave him a wife, "and she bear him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's .... But if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: then his master shall bring him unto God [or, the judges], and shall bring him to the door, or unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever." (Ex. 21:2-6.) This shows that a strong affection sometimes existed between master and slave. Deut. 23:15, 16 seems to refer to a foreign slave who escaped from his foreign master. No such provisions as are mentioned were needed if he were a Hebrew. These matters are mentioned simply to show something of slavery in past ages. In the New Testament master and slave stood on an equal footing in the sight of God. No effort was made "to make free men out of slaves, but good slaves out of bad ones." Jesus and the apostles were not social reformers. But strict application of the principles of the gospel of Christ to one's self would make slavery unthinkable; it would also make slavery unprofitable. A man who was thoroughly Christian would not want to own and use a fellow Christian; and the Golden Rule would deter a Christian from being the master of any slave, for no master would be willing to swap places with his slave. Christianity offers no grounds for anyone to profit by the unwilling services of another.



**COMMENTS ON THE LESSON****Philemon's Love, Faith, and Good Works (Verses 4-7)**

When Paul prayed he had special objects for which he prayed, and for which he gave thanks. How different from the usual run of prayers today, in which everything in general and nothing in particular is prayed for. "I thank my God always, making mention of thee in my prayers, hearing of thy love, and of the faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints." The fact that Paul speaks of hearing of Philemon's good life does not mean that he was not personally acquainted with Philemon, for verse 19 clearly implies that Paul had led him to Christ; but Paul had not seen him for a long time, and was now glad to learn of his devotion to Christ and the saints. John expresses a similar sentiment: "Greater joy have I none than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth." (3 John 4.) Paul's language should therefore cause no one to think that Paul had not met Philemon. The expression "the faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all the saints," shows that Philemon's faith was active. It does not mean that he merely believed, and did nothing about it. His faith reached out in service toward the Lord, and toward the saints. His faith therefore was a faith of action, not a dead faith—"faith apart from works is dead." (James 2:26.) There is fellowship in that degree of faith—"that the fellowship of thy faith may become effectual, in the knowledge of every good thing which is in you, unto Christ." When the knowledge of such faith was spread abroad, it would be effectual in leading others to believe in Christ. Jesus expressed the same truth in different words: "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.) "Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Pet. 2:11, 12.) Though Paul was a prisoner in faraway Rome, he had much joy and comfort in learning how Philemon's love had refreshed the hearts of the saints; this was practical love, not a mere sentiment.

**Paul Pleads for Onesimus (Verses 8-14)**

The spirit of Paul's letter to Philemon is excellent, and the tact and wisdom by which he reached his main point could not be improved upon. He informs Philemon that, as an apostle, he had the authority to demand of him what to do; but when two friends of noble spirits were involved, a command would seem cold and out of place. "For love's sake I rather beseech" you. That was authority clothed in a tender appeal. And that this beseeching might the more stir the heart of Philemon, he refers to himself as "Paul the aged, and now a prisoner also of Christ Jesus." "Paul the aged"—a long time he had suffered and worked to lead men to Christ, and now for that very work he was a prisoner—deprived of his liberty. His much suffering shows how devoted he was to the Lord, and his age and imprisonment would touch the heart of Philemon. Onesimus, a slave belonging to Philemon, had run away from his master, and for

some reason had come to Paul's place of imprisonment. Paul had succeeded in making a Christian of him, and had developed a warm affection for him. He knew in some way, perhaps from the mouth of Onesimus himself, that Onesimus had been an unprofitable servant; and this may have been the outgrowth of a deep-seated aversion to being a slave, and this may have prompted him to run away. And then for the first time Paul states the nature and object of his plea: "I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus." He had carefully built for a favorable hearing. Had he abruptly demanded anything of Philemon concerning Onesimus, it would most likely have stirred up wrong emotions in the heart of Philemon. Paul grants that Onesimus had been unprofitable to Philemon; but now, having become a servant of God, and having learned from Paul the duties of a slave to his master, he is a profitable servant. He had been profitable to Paul, in what way we are not told; but there were many things he could do for the aged Paul to make his imprisonment more bearable. "Whom I have sent back to thee in his own person, that is, my very heart." This shows Paul's high sense of honor; instead of helping the slave to escape, he taught him that it was his duty as a Christian to return to his master. His very heart went with him. This shows how deeply devoted he was to this once rebellious slave, but now an obedient servant of the Lord. He would gladly have kept Onesimus with him, that he might minister to the aged prisoner in behalf of Philemon. But he would not thus take advantage of Philemon, even though Philemon might have been willing to the arrangement; but it would not have been treating Philemon right, for it might have been asking a thing of Philemon that he would rather not grant. "But without thy mind I would do nothing." He would do nothing that would seem that he was taking advantage of another; he did not want anyone to do anything for him that might seem to be of necessity. He would not use any means to cause anyone to do anything for him—merely to save themselves from feeling embarrassed. He would not do anything that might cause Philemon to think or say, "Well, Paul is a great and good man, and has done much in devoted service to the Lord; and he might not like it if I do not grant his request." Whatever was done for Paul, he wanted it done of free will, and not as of necessity.

### **Paul's Request and Pledge (Verses 15-21)**

Paul continues his pleading for Onesimus; it is a very personal appeal. He hints that God's providence might have overruled the whole affair for the good of master and slave. Paul did not directly affirm that point, but used the word "perhaps," and this might have been done to avoid appearing to be dogmatic toward a friend; but Onesimus was now a servant of Christ, and desired to fulfill his obligations to his master, which meant that now Philemon might have him forever. And now Onesimus would be more than a servant, "a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord." In the flesh he would be the servant of Philemon; in the Lord he would be his brother; he would always be Paul's beloved son in the gospel, and also brother in the Lord. In every way Paul reminds Philemon of his love for Onesimus. "If then thou countest me a partner, receive him as myself"—receive him as gladly and joyfully as you would receive me, should I visit you. This

plea, and the fact that Onesimus was now a brother in Christ, would make it hard for the faithful Philemon to inflict any punishment on Onesimus; but if he had other slaves, could he maintain discipline over them if he failed to punish Onesimus? There is no record of the manner in which matters were worked out. Of course, if Onesimus was his only slave, it would be a simple matter to accept him back into service without any punishment. And then Paul further shows his earnestness and fairness in the matter by making a pledge: "But if he hath wronged thee at all, or oweth thee aught, put that to mine account; I Paul write it with mine own hand, I will repay it." Some have concluded from these words that Onesimus had stolen from Philemon when he ran away, but there is nothing in the words to warrant such a conclusion. Onesimus had wronged Philemon in running away; and in reality he owed his master for the lost time. Paul delicately refrains from directly charging these things against Onesimus, but merely says, "If . . ." Probably Timothy had written for Paul up to this point, and then Paul pledged himself with his own writing, as a guarantee that the pledge was his pledge. And then reminds Philemon of his great debt to Paul—"thou owest to me even thine own self besides." We gather from this that Paul had been God's agent in the salvation of Philemon; otherwise it would be hard to see why Philemon owed him his own self. "Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my heart in Christ." This was a plea that Philemon would make such disposition of matters as to bring joy to Paul, and yet it left the disposition of matters entirely with Philemon; he would beseech and plead, and those tender appeals came with all the authority of a command. This Philemon would recognize. Some think that Paul's statement in verse 21 shows that Paul expected Philemon to set Onesimus free, but that is not certain. It does not seem that Paul would seek to interfere with Philemon's property rights. It could mean that Paul had confidence in Philemon, that he would make the lot of Onesimus less harsh than was usually the lot of slaves. As for setting Onesimus free, only Philemon could determine that. Anyway, Philemon would not want to treat a brother as a common slave was usually treated. He might even have set him free.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Do you know of any other piece of literature that is so appealing, so tender and considerate in expression, so exalted in spirit, as Paul's letter to Philemon? It will do any Christian good to sit down and read it thoughtfully, the while keeping in mind the circumstances that prompted Paul to so write. Try it.

Imbibe some of Paul's spirit as exemplified in that he would take no advantage of Philemon to have him act as of necessity; he would not have Philemon to do anything for him except of his own free will. He appeals only to his love and a high sense of honor. You who engage in high-powered pressure to get people to act as you wish, or who bring about conditions or circumstances in which people are forced to do certain things to "save their face," how do you measure up with Paul's high spirit of honor? Such methods bear no relation to Christianity; they are not even polite. They are holdup schemes, in which no Christian can have a part, and in which no considerate and fair-minded gentleman will engage.

**TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION**

Slavery in the early days of national Israel.  
 Slavery in the Roman empire in Paul's day.  
 What the New Testament says about the conduct of master and slave.

**QUESTIONS**

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

What degree of faith did Philemon have?  
 Show what effect such living faith has on others.

**Lesson Settings**

Give time, place, and persons.  
 How did Jesus and the apostles seek to correct social evils?  
 Who is the first man spoken of as owning slaves?  
 Who is the first man of which we have any account that was sold into slavery?  
 Give some regulations in the law of Moses concerning slavery.  
 How would the principles of Christianity make slavery undesirable and unprofitable.

**Verses 4-7**

What is noticeable in Paul's prayers?  
 What is wrong with many of the prayers heard these days?  
 Discuss verses 4 and 5.

**Verses 8-14**

Discuss Paul's method of reaching his main point.  
 Discuss verses 8 and 9.  
 What relation did Paul sustain to Onesimus? Discuss verses 11 and 12.  
 What shows Paul's high sense of honor?

**Verses 15-21**

Discuss verses 15 and 16.  
 Discuss verse 17.  
 What pledge did Paul make?  
 How did Philemon owe himself to Paul?  
 How could Philemon best fulfill Paul's plea of verse 20?  
 Discuss verse 21.  
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XII—June 18, 1944

**A GOOD SOLDIER OF CHRIST JESUS**

2 Tim. 2:1-4, 8-12; 4:5-8

1 Thou therefore, my child, be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.  
 2 And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.  
 3 Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.  
 4 No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of this life; that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier.  
 8 Remember Jesus Christ; risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel:  
 9 Wherein I suffer hardship unto bonds, as a malefactor; but the word of God is not bound.  
 10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.  
 11 Faithful is the saying: For if we died with him, we shall also live with him:  
 12 If we endure, we shall also reign with him: if we shall deny him, he also will deny us:  
 5 But be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry.  
 6 For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come.  
 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith:  
 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. 2:3.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Heb. 11:32 to 12:2.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

June 12. M	A Sacred Trust (2 Tim. 1:3-14)
June 13. T	Heroic Living (2 Tim. 2:1-13)
June 14. W	God's Workman (2 Tim. 2:14-26)
June 15. T	A Teacher's Resources (2 Tim. 3:10-16)
June 16. F	The Crown of Righteousness (2 Tim. 4:1-8)
June 17. S	A Faithful Prophet (Amos 7:10-17)
June 18. S	Courageous Apostles (Acts 4:13-22)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 66. Authorities differ; some, supposing that Paul was a prisoner only once at Rome, would place the date of the letter some years earlier.

*Places.*—Paul wrote at Rome, perhaps in a dungeon; it seems that Timothy was at Ephesus.

*Persons.*—Paul and Timothy.

*Lesson Links.*—Timothy became one of Paul's helpers during Paul's second preaching tour from Antioch. "And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewess that believed; but his father was a Greek. The same was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium." (Acts 16:1, 2.) He and his mother must have been converted by Paul on his first tour through this section. Five, Hackett says seven, years had elapsed since his first visit to this section. During these years Timothy had made rapid progress in Christian growth. He must have been at least twenty years of age, probably older, at this time. Paul was so pleased with him, that he prevailed on Timothy to go with him. From that time on to the end Timothy was Paul's most devoted friend and helper. This visit of Paul to this section was about A.D. 50. If Second Timothy was written A.D. 66, Timothy must have then been in his middle thirties. How then could Paul still refer to him as a youth? Some authorities tell us that these ancients divided a human life into three periods, childhood, youth, and old age. The childhood period ended at seventeen, youth from that time till old age began at the age of forty-six. One thing is certain, Timothy was not a boy at this time, though he likely was when he was baptized sixteen years before this letter was written. In his first letter to Timothy Paul writes "unto Timothy, my true child in faith." (1 Tim. 1:1, 2.) This second letter—"to Timothy, my beloved child." And then Paul speaks of his unceasing prayers for Timothy, praying for him night and day—"longing to see thee, remembering thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; having been reminded of the unfeigned faith that is in thee; which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and, I am persuaded, in thee also." (2 Tim. 1:3-5.) As nothing is said of Timothy's father save that he was a Greek, it is probable that he died when Timothy was quite young. But his mother and grandmother gave him a good start in life. "But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. 3:

14, 15.) These Old Testament scriptures had made him wise unto salvation by leading him to faith in Christ Jesus.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### **Timothy Exhorted to Teach Others (Verses 1, 2)**

Paul had just mentioned two courses of action followed by different people. "This thou knowest, that all that are in Asia turned away from me; of whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes." Asia then was a narrow strip on the west coast of what we now know as Asia Minor. All that country had heard the word through the agency and leadership of Paul, but it seems that the Judaizers had succeeded in weaning them away from Paul. He mentions two, for it seems that he had expected better of them; but there was one outstanding exception. "The Lord grant mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus: for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; but, when he was in Rome, he sought me diligently, and found me (the Lord grant unto him to find mercy of the Lord in that day); and in how many things he ministered at Ephesus, thou knowest very well." Incidentally this shows that Paul was in close confinement at this time; for had he been preaching and teaching in his own hired house, he could have been easily found. On the basis of the two courses of action Paul had just mentioned, he exhorts, "Thou therefore, my child, be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." The whole gospel of Christ is the grace of God. In view of the examples he had just mentioned, Paul exhorts Timothy to stand firm for all that is implied in the grace of Christ—to stand firm for the gospel of Christ against all who would turn people from it. In view of the relation Paul stood toward Christ and the gospel, to turn from him—to forsake him—was to forsake Christ and his gospel. Hence the further admonition: "And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." Of course Timothy was to endeavor to teach every one; but this language seems to imply that he was to select faithful men, not simply believers, but faithful men of ability who would be able to teach others, and to give them special instruction and training. No matter how much you teach some people, you cannot make them either faithful or able to teach. Timothy had been taught the Old Testament scriptures from a child, but he had learned the gospel in its fullness from Paul; the things he had learned from Paul were the things he was to commit to faithful men. Paul was about to be sacrificed, and he wanted trustworthy men to carry forward the things he had taught. The gift of the spirit which Timothy had may have been a degree of inspiration which enabled him to remember accurately the things Paul had taught him. (2 Tim. 1:6.) "Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee guard through the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us." (2 Tim. 1:13, 14.)

#### **Suffer Hardship as a Good Soldier (Verses 3, 4)**

When we think of the conveniences and comforts surrounding many preachers today, we see very little resemblance to the hardship and suffering of the soldiers in the field of action. It is something to think about. Many of us lack much suffering, which we should

fill up on behalf of Christ. (Col. 1:24.) Paul suffered as a good soldier suffers; those who so suffer are few; that is, those who so suffer for Christ. And a soldier's sole business was to be a soldier; but Paul's language did not condemn himself for supplying his own needs by the labor of his hands. It is said that the Roman soldier could engage in no other activities than soldiering. And it was a sad day for the Roman empire when the army began to meddle ill the affairs of the government. And the Christian soldier should not entangle himself in the affairs of the government of Christ; it is a sad day for the government of Christ when his soldiers begin to meddle in the affairs of his government. Let Christ reign supreme, and let his soldiers serve faithfully. And here verse 5 fits in: "And if also a man contend in the games, he is not crowned, except he have contended lawfully." There are certain rules and regulations that he must comply with with exactness. Neither his convenience, his conscience, nor what he thinks is right, is his guide; if he undertook to go by these, he would be ruled out of the games before he got good started. And Paul means that illustration to govern us in the race of life. It means touch—"not crowned, except he have contended lawfully." Are you contending lawfully, or do you go on the theory that whatever you think is right is right for you? Remember, you will not be crowned, except you have contended lawfully.

### **Paul Is Regarded as a Malefactor (Verses 8-12)**

Timothy is exhorted to keep in mind him whom he served, "Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel." My gospel, the gospel which I preached to you—not the gospel of the Judaizers. Christ Jesus was of the seed of David according to the flesh. Now since Jesus is the Christ, as such he must be kept in mind. That must be a living truth in the heart of the Christian. If we do not keep in mind the truth that he is God's anointed king, we might cease to regard his word as authoritative, and might grow slack in our obedience to him. But because of preaching this gospel Paul suffered "hardship unto bonds, as a malefactor." In the imprisonment spoken of by Luke in the latter part of Acts, he was not treated as a malefactor. In fact in that imprisonment there was no charge of any crime, but he was sent to Rome because Paul appealed to Caesar to escape the fury of the Jews. Here now he is considered as guilty of a crime worthy of death. He had fought for Christ as against paganism, the established religion of Rome, and his enemies had seized on that as a means of getting rid of him. As the Judaizers were such bitter enemies, one wonders if they were not the leaders in bringing such charges against him, even though they professed to be Christians. But the gospel was not bound; they could chain the preacher, but not that which he preached. God's thoughts, God's philosophy of life, cannot be bound with chains, nor shut up in the walls of a prison. The elect of verse 10 are not the Christians, but the Jews, the ones God had formerly chosen, for whose sake Paul was willing to endure all things, "that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." Paul greatly desired the salvation of his kinsmen according to the flesh. (Rom. 9:1-3; 10:1.) But he recognized, and taught, that there was no salvation for them, except in Christ. So long as they rebelled against Christ Jesus, they were

lost. Paul knew that death for him was not far off. Christ died for claiming to be the Christ, the Son of God; to die for making that same claim for him was to die with him. This gave Paul the assurance that he would live with him. To reign with him is the same as to live with him in glory. Paul could have saved himself from death by the Romans, by denying Christ. The believers in Christ were given the alternative, to deny Christ and be freed, or to confess him and be killed. But to deny Christ was to have Christ deny him, and Paul would not deny him.

### **The Good Fight—Its Reward (2 Tim. 4:5-8)**

Paul loved Timothy devotedly, and would gladly have saved him any suffering, if he could have done so without endangering his salvation, and Timothy's, and countless numbers of others. He could not therefore afford to say to Timothy, Quit preaching the word, and thereby save yourself from so much suffering; but, "Preach the word" without letup. Because many will turn away from the truth and turn unto fables, there is great need that some one preach the word on all occasions, in all seasons. People would be carried away with all kinds of foolish notions—would even employ teachers to teach to suit them, regardless of truth and right. "But be thou sober in all things." This was not a warning against drinking intoxicants, for Timothy was so austere in his habits that Paul had to advise him to take a little wine as a medicine. But men can be intoxicated with error, partyism, and foolish notions. Herein we need to be sober—to keep ourselves under such restraint that we can think correctly, and without bias. To stay with the word would cause him to suffer hardship. To do the work of an evangelist was to preach the word; he could do all that was required in doing the work of an evangelist in the city of Ephesus; and in so doing fulfill his ministry. Timothy must carry on. "For I am already being offered"—the marginal reading tells us that the Greek word means, "poured out as a drink-offering." He had had one appearance before the high court, which was so fierce in its attitude toward him, that his associates took fright, and fled, leaving him alone. (Verse 16.) But Paul's work was ended; he had fought the good fight. His whole ministry was one continuous fight against the forces of evil. He did not compromise with the enemy; he sought not to appease. In all of it he had kept the faith; and now he had finished the course—he had reached the end of the race; the whole race track was behind him. Nothing now lay before him, except death and immortal glory. For a long time Paul had had a desire to depart and be with Christ. (Phil. 1:23.) Now that desire was about to be realized. The race having been finished, a crown, not of olive leaves, but of righteousness, awaited him; but he would lay no exclusive claims on such a crown—not to him only, "but also to all them that have loved his appearing." This would be the crown of glory that fadeth not away. "And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away." (1 Pet. 5:4.) "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." (Rev. 2:10.) "Crown of righteousness," "crown of glory," "crown of life," and also the incorruptible crown. (1 Cor. 9:25.) These are all different terms referring to the same reward. To suffering Paul it was a glorious prospect.



### SOME REFLECTIONS

Paul was a bearer of a message from God, and he delivered that message faithfully. No messenger has a right to tamper with the message he carries. It is the messenger's duty to deliver the message to the right person or persons. If the messenger had no right to alter the message before he delivered it, the ones to whom it is brought have no right to inject into it any of their own notions. Paul would have Timothy transmit to others what he had heard Paul say. No man has a right to change that message; it is his duty to receive it just as the inspired messengers delivered it. And yet there is much religious anarchy in the world. To say that it does not matter what a man believes just so he is sincere, or to say that whatever a man thinks is right is right for him, is to make every man a law unto himself. That doctrine is anarchy. Inspired men taught no such doctrine, and a man who preaches such doctrine is not preaching the word; it is setting aside the word as our guide; it is putting the way of man in himself. "O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. 10:23.)

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Paul's charge to Timothy.  
Paul's good fight.  
Jer. 10:23.

### QUESTIONS

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

the lives of some preachers ?  
What lesson do you get out of verse 4?

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
What relation did Timothy sustain to Paul?  
When and where did he become Paul's helper?  
What was Timothy's probable age when Paul wrote the second letter to him?  
How did Timothy first learn the sacred writings?  
What had he learned from Paul, and how should he treat what he had learned?

#### Verses 1, 2

What two courses had Paul just mentioned?  
Discuss verses 1 and 2.

#### Verses 3, 4

Discuss verses 3 and 4.  
How does Paul's life as a preacher compare with

#### Verses 8-12

Whom was Timothy exhorted to remember, and why?  
How does Paul describe his condition at the time of this letter?  
Discuss Paul's attitude toward the Jews.  
What comes of denying Christ?

#### 2 Tim. 4:5-8

Why did Paul charge Timothy, whom he loved, to preach the word?  
"Be thou sober" — what did Paul mean?  
What is the work of an evangelist?  
Discuss item by item the things mentioned in verses 6-8.  
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XIII—June 25, 1944

### QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS

Tit. 1:5-11

5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge;

6 If any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having children that believe, who are not accused of riot or unruly.

7 For the bishop must be blameless, as God's steward; not self-willed, not soon angry, no brawler, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre;

8 But given to hospitality, a lover of good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled:

9 Holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers.

10 For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision,

11 Whose mouths must be stopped: men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching." (1 Tim. 5:17.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Lev. 19:32-34.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

June 19. M

June 20. T

June 21. W

June 22. T

June 23. F

June 24. S

June 25. S

The Elders of Israel (Ex. 3:15-13)

Elders in Every Church (Acts 14:19-23)

Paul's Address to Elders (Acts 20:17-35)

Honor to Elders (1 Tim. 5:17-21)

Duties of Elders (1 Pet. 5:1-5)

Obey the Elders (Heb. 13:14-17)

Other Qualifications of Elders (1 Tim. 3:1-6)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 64.

*Places.*—Titus was on Crete; the place from which Paul wrote to Titus is not definitely known.

*Persons.*—Paul and Titus, one of Paul's trusted helpers.

*Lesson Links.*—This section of our lesson, with a few changes and omissions, has been adapted from Sound Doctrine, Vol. III, by C. R. Nichol and R. L. Whiteside.

In the church every member has duties to perform, just as each member of the body has certain work to do. Neither is boss of the other; neither lords it over the other. Paul warns each member of the church at Rome "not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think" (Rom. 12:3), and then uses the human body as an illustration to enforce his admonition. The disciples while Jesus was with them clamored for high positions of honor. He said to them, "Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant." (See Matt. 20:20-28.) Paul does not contradict his Lord when he says, "If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." (1 Tim. 3:1.) It is a work he desires, and not official dignity. One meaning of the word office is, "That which anything is fitted to perform; a function." In that sense each member of the body fills an office. We have many members in the human body, each filling its own office; so also it is in the body of Christ. (Rom. 12:4, 5.)

The Greek word where the translators give us the word "bishop" simply means an overseer—literally an overinspector. In religious circles these days the word "bishop" is such a high-sounding title that it seems out of place to call a humble man of God a bishop.

To the elders of Ephesus, Paul said, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops [overseers], to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28.) The overseer's duty is twofold: (1) "Take heed unto yourselves." Give yourself a close inspection. If an elder realizes the solemn obligation resting upon him, and the awful consequences, both to himself and the church, of a failure to fill the measure of the trust committed to him, he will not be satisfied with anything less than a rigid self-examination, to see if his ability and his motives are what they should be, and to see if his life has been such as to inspire confidence of the members in his integrity and uprightness. (2) "And to all the flock." The elder must have no pets—in his sight there must be neither rich nor poor, and yet some need more of his attentions than others. How can an elder feed the flock if he has nothing to feed them? And to make the same little speech every Sunday feeds no one. A wise elder knows that he cannot do all the teaching that is needed. Sometimes a special work is needed; a wise elder will detect this need, and will call in the man that is best fitted to do that special teaching.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### Why Paul Left Titus in Crete (Verse 5)

Crete is an island in the Mediterranean Sea, and is about one hundred forty miles in length. It lies just outside the entrance to the Aegean Sea, somewhat closer to Greece than to Asia Minor. We are told that many Jews lived on the island at the time Titus was there. No one knows when the gospel was first preached on this island. Some Cretans were in Jerusalem at the great Pentecost. (Acts 2:11.) Some of these may have been among the number baptized on that occasion, and later carried the gospel back to Crete. Paul with Titus had visited there, but hastened on to other points, leaving Titus to do some unfinished work. His language to Titus shows that there were numerous churches on the island. In his record concerning the labors of Paul, Luke gives no account of any work that Paul did on that island. It is probable therefore, that, after Luke closed his book of Acts, Paul was released from prison, and put in a few more years of effective preaching before he was arrested a second time; and during this interval visited Crete. He left Titus there as his representative to do some needed work. Titus was therefore acting under the direct authority of Paul; he was Paul's agent. He was first to set in order the things that were wanting. Some things in the churches on that island were not as they should be; these matters Titus was to correct. He was then to appoint elders. He was not to set things in order by appointing elders, as some would have us believe. If a church is not in order, it cannot be made so by appointing elders. To attempt to appoint elders at such a time is almost certain to create more disorder. In the appointment of elders unity and good will should prevail. If there are factions or disagreement, then neither side would want the men the others wanted. In the very nature of the ease a newly established church must exist for a time without elders. Material suitable for elders must be developed, and the members must be sufficiently well informed as to know what an elder should be. In most of the early churches there were Jews who were well in-

structed in the Old Testament scriptures and had had considerable experience in the synagogue worship and service. With them it was not as if they had been lately converted from heathenism or a life of sin and shame. And being endowed with spiritual gifts (and some such gifted people were then needed in every church), they would soon be prepared to be elders.

### **An Elder Must Be Blameless (Verse 6)**

The kind of work elders must do makes certain qualifications necessary. If a man had a clear conception of Christianity and of the work elders are required to do, he would know the necessary qualifications, even if none had been given. In business affairs there are no laws laid down as to the qualifications a business manager must possess, but he who knows the nature of the work to be done knows the qualifications a man must possess to be able to do the work. Men who know nothing about the work a firm is engaged in would be poor hands to select a business manager. Too many members of the church know little, or nothing, about the real nature of the work God has in view for the church, and therefore do not know the necessary qualifications for overseers of that work. Even after God has plainly laid down the qualifications of elders, few members of the church know what they are. The elder must be blameless; his life must be such that he gives no grounds for suspicion or just criticism. He "must be without reproach"—"he must have good testimony from them that are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." (1 Tim. 3:2, 7.) If the members of a church have no confidence in a man's integrity and moral stamina, he would be worse than a failure as an elder. If the outsiders consider him an unworthy character, he would bring shame on the church. "The husband of one wife." That should be easily understood, and is when it is taken for just what it says. A man's children may be such as to disqualify him. Even when a man does his best to teach and train his children, and has had his efforts nullified by sinister influences of which he knows nothing, the bad conduct of his children will make it impossible for him to do any good as an elder. If he tries to teach and correct others, people will say, "He had better look after his own children."

### **Some Negative Qualifications (Verse 7)**

A steward is one who has charge of another's household affairs. The church is God's household, and the elders are to oversee that household. "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." (1 Cor. 4:2.) This should make any elder think seriously. He is not blameless as God's steward, if he is self-willed—if he is determined to have his Own way about things that are matters of judgment. If he disregards the judgment and wishes of others in such matters, he is seeking to lord it over God's heritage. (1 Pet. 5:1-3.) "Not soon angry, no brawler, no striker." He must not be hot-tempered; neither a brawler, nor a quarrelsome man. A quarrelsome man is a pest. He must not be ready with a blow. It all adds up to the fact that the elder must be a man of a good even-tempered disposition, a gentle man in the full sense of that term. "Not greedy of filthy lucre." Lucre is gain. Money is not filthy lucre; gain is not filthy lucre. Filthy lucre is base, or dis-

honest, gain. An elder must not be greedy for making money regardless of the honesty of his methods; and too strong a desire will lead to that very thing. These therefore are some things that an elder must not be; and also they are traits that no Christian should have.

### **Things an Elder Must Be and Do (Verse 8)**

Instead of being greedy for filthy lucre—instead of gaining money by any possible means, the elder must be generous—must be given to hospitality. Because of meager accommodations for travelers people were expected to give lodging to travelers. Perhaps the traveler's means were limited. To be given to hospitality meant that one was in the habit of entertaining people in his home without any charge. And there are many ways in which people can show hospitality. A stingy man, a man that grudges any assistance that he might extend to a person, is a poor specimen for an elder. To see how much stress inspiration placed on hospitality read such passages as Rom. 12:13; 1 Tim. 3:2; Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 4:9; 3 John 5. "A lover of good." He must be a lover of good people, a lover of good principles, a lover of good conduct. If a man loves to be with rowdy people, to indulge in smutty language and worldly things, he cannot be an elder. "Sober-minded"—a sound thinker, not frivolous, nor fanatical, not given to being carried away with foolish notions. "Just" relates to his attitude toward his fellow man. He must deal honestly with others, and must be fair in his judgment of others; and in no way should he seek to gain the advantage of others, nor to use them to further his own schemes. He must be upright in his dealings. "Holy" tells what his attitude toward God must be; it means devoted to God. If a man is devoted to his own interests, and to the things of the world, he cannot be an elder. Let the elder—let all Christians—make this prayer of David a daily habit: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalm 139:23, 24.) "The three words, sober, just, holy, present the three sides of human duty—duty to one's self, duty to men, and duty to God." (Compare with Titus 2:12.) "Self-controlled"—keeping one's appetites and passions. Without this self-restraint a man would make a poor showing at exercising a restraining influence over others. This is also a virtue that every Christian must cultivate. This he must add, if he would become a partaker of the divine nature, and be admitted into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Pet. 1:3-11.)

### **The Elder Must Maintain Sound Doctrine (Verses 9-11)**

The elder is a shepherd, and must protect the flock. This requires ability and watchfulness. He must never let go the faithful word, the gospel of Christ; it is trustworthy, worthy of confidence. The elder must hold the gospel, no matter how many forsake it or oppose it. Sound doctrine is, according to the marginal reading, healthful teaching — teaching that promotes spiritual health. Only the gospel is healthful teaching. The elder must protect the flock from poisonous teaching, and be able to convict those who speak against the gospel. This requires natural ability plus Bible knowledge. The "unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers" were mostly the Judaizers, who went among the churches teaching that all Gentile

disciples of the Lord must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. These men were especially dangerous deceivers; for they professed to be Christians, and to be greatly devoted to God and his law—"men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." Any gain obtained by teaching false doctrine and deceiving people is filthy lucre, base gain. And people who pay for such teaching are foolish. The false teacher gets his living by teaching false doctrine; the people who pay him get nothing but deception. These false teachers are the unruly men, vain talkers, deceivers, whose mouths must be stopped. There are too few elders who can meet and overcome false teachers; many do not know when teaching is false.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Elders occupy a responsible place. To them Peter gives this charge: "Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder." (1 Pet. 5:2-5.) Again to the members: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this were unprofitable for you." (Heb. 13:17.)

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Why elders are needed.  
Wherein do elders frequently fail in their duties?  
How may members make the elders lot hard?  
The duty of members toward their elders.

### QUESTIONS

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

outsiders?  
Discuss the requirements of verse 6.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Discuss greatness in worldly kingdoms and in the kingdom of Christ.  
Repeat and discuss Acts 20:28.

#### Verse 7

Discuss each item in verse 7.

#### Verse 8

Discuss hospitality.  
Discuss each item in verse 8.

#### Verse 5

Discuss the things Paul left Titus in Crete to do.  
Discuss some evils that may come from appointing elders in churches that are not in order.

#### Verses 9-11

What illustrates the relation of an elder to the church?  
What is sound doctrine?  
What should be the attitude of an elder toward false teaching?  
Who were the main troublemakers in Paul's day?  
What must an elder be able to do?  
Discuss the reflections.

#### Verse 6

Why did the Lord have to tell us the necessary qualifications of elders?  
What is said about blameless?  
Why must an elder be of good report from

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**THIRD QUARTER****THE MAKING OF A NATION: JOSHUA TO DAVID**

*AIM: To learn through a study of the era from Joshua to David the moral values which make for national stability; to learn from the experiences of early Israel the help that may be had from God. and the part which we, as Christian citizens, should play in the life of our own nation.*

Lesson I—July 2, 1944

**ENTERING THE PROMISED LAND**

Josh. 1:1-9; 23:1-5

1 Now it came to pass after the death of Moses the servant of Jehovah, that Jehovah spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,

2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, to you have I given it, as I spake unto Moses.

4 From the wilderness, and this Lebanon, even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your border.

5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee. nor forsake thee.

6 Be strong and of good courage; for thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land which I sware unto their fathers to give them.

7 Only be strong and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law. which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest have good success whithersoever thou goest.

8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate thereon day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not affrighted, neither be thou dismayed: for Jehovah thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

1 And it came to pass after many days, when Jehovah had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, and Joshua was old and well stricken in years;

2 That Joshua called for all Israel for their elders and for their heads, and for their judges and for their officers, and said unto them, I am old and well stricken in years:

3 And ye have seen all that Jehovah your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for Jehovah your God, he it is that hath fought for you.

4 Behold, I have allotted unto you these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from the Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun.

5 And Jehovah your God, he will thrust them out from before you. and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as Jehovah your God spake unto you.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Be strong and of good courage; be not affrighted, neither be thou dismayed: for Jehovah thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." (Josh. 1:9.)



*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Psalm 121.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

June 25. M

June 27. T

June 28. W

June 29. T

June 30. F

July 1. S

July 2. S

Israel's New Leader (Josh. 1:1-9)

Joshua's Consecration (Num. 27:15-23)

Joshua's Commission (Deut. 31:1-8)

Joshua Warns Israel (Josh. 1:12-18)

Joshua's Farewell Address (Josh. 23:1-8)

A Land of Opportunity (Num. 13:25-33)

The Need of Wisdom (Prov. 2:1-8)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—For the first section of our lesson, according to Usher, 1451 B. C.; according to Hales, 1609 B.C. The second section, Usher, 1444 B.C.; Hales, 1596 B.C.

*Places.*—In the first section of our lesson the children of Israel were encamped on the east side of the Jordan near the north end of the Dead Sea. The second section of the lesson, the hill country of Ephraim, probably near Shechem, as seems from Josh. 24:1.

*Persons.*—Jehovah, Joshua, and the children of Israel. Joshua was the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim. (1 Chron. 7:20-27.)

*Lesson Links.*—Soon after the children of Israel came out of Egypt, the Amalekites made war on them. Here Joshua first comes into notice as the leader of Israel in that battle, and gained the victory over the Amalekites. From that time on he is frequently mentioned as the minister, the helper, of Moses. The children of Israel remained in camp at Sinai nearly a whole year, leaving there "in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month." (Num. 10:11, 12.) It seems that within the year, or a few months added, they reached Kadesh-barnea in the wilderness of Paran. From that point twelve spies were sent to view the land of Canaan. These spies brought back a glowing report concerning the country, but ten of them said that the people were too powerful for them to conquer. Joshua was one of the spies, and Caleb another. Joshua and Caleb contended that they were able to take the land; but the congregation sided with the majority of the spies, and planned to select new leaders, and return to Egypt. In this they were much like some churches today, when the elders will not lead them the way they want to go. Had Israel not rebelled, they could have then gone immediately into the land of Canaan; but because of this rebellion they were condemned to wander in the wilderness until all perished who were over twenty years old when they came out of Egypt, save Caleb and Joshua. Hence, for a period of about thirty-seven years they wandered about in the wilderness, so that the time between their leaving Egypt and entering Canaan was forty years. (Read chapters thirteen and fourteen of Numbers.) When the time drew near for the children of Israel to cross the Jordan into the land of promise, "Jehovah said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tent of meeting, that I may give him a charge .... And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong and of good courage; for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swear unto them: and I will be with thee." (Deut. 31:14-23.) When Moses had finished his work, at the command of Jehovah he went up into a mountain from which he could view the promised land;

and there Moses died, and Jehovah buried him. "But no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day." (Deut. 32:48-52; 34:1-7.)

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Joshua Made Leader (Verses 1-4)

From the time Moses was sent to lead Israel out of bondage to the day-of his death, he was God's lawgiver and prophet. "And Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days: so the days of weeping in the mourning for Moses were ended." (Deut. 34:7, 8.) After this period of mourning came days of activity. Joshua was well trained and fully equipped for his arduous task. "And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him." (Deut. 34:9.) Moses had been Jehovah's servant in a special way; he was, so to speak, God's prime minister; now Joshua takes his place, and is commanded to go over the Jordan with all the people of Israel, and take possession of the promised land. Jehovah was giving them the land—"the land which I do give to them," and yet they would have to drive out the nations before they would come into full possession of this gift. "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, to you have I given it." This means, I give you all the land you conquer. To say that when God promises a gift, the recipient does not have to do anything to come into possession of the gift, shows no understanding of the Bible. The extent of the territory that was to be theirs is outlined in verse 4, but was never fully possessed until the days of David and Solomon. (2 Sam. 8:3-14; 2 Chron. 9:26.) They came into possession of this gift only after years of bitter fighting; and they could remain in possession only by continued obedience to Jehovah. "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." And all this, if they departed from Jehovah. (Deut. 4:25, 26.)

### Jehovah Encourages Joshua (Verses 5-9)

Joshua was entering on a new experience. He would greatly miss Moses, for he had been under the direction of Moses for the past forty years. Now he is to take the place of Moses as leader. To possess the land of promise would require much war—hard fighting; for the inhabitants of the land knew how to fight, and they had many walled cities. A walled city in those days gave great protection to the city, but a wall would be of no value now. But Jehovah commanded the people of Israel to conquer the land, even to drive out the inhabitants, and he does not command people to do a thing that cannot, with his help, be done. He promised to be with them and make their faithful efforts successful. They needed the encouraging words of Jehovah. To Joshua he said, "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life" that is, so long as he and the people were obedient, so long as they made it possible for Jehovah to remain in their midst, he would not fail them nor forsake them. In view of the task before him Joshua needed these words of assurance. With Jehovah on his side

he could not fail. And is not the God of Joshua our God today? He certainly is not less interested in those who are fighting his battles today than he was then. "Be strong and of good courage"-put your full strength into the task, and do not become weak through fear. He must not only be strong and of good courage in battle, but he was also to "be strong and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee." It sometimes takes more courage to do the will of God faithfully, than to fight in a battle. Good success depended on a strict adherence to that law—"turn not from it to the right hand or to the left." That law Moses had written in a book. (Deut. 31:24.) "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate thereon day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." With such assurance Joshua should go into every battle with good courage, no matter how strong the enemy might seem to be; no odds should dismay him. It is encouraging to believe that God is with a man in doing all he is commanded to do. "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:20.)

### **Joshua Calls a Meeting (Josh. 23:1-3)**

For this section of our lesson to have much meaning and force to us, we must get together some parts of the history of the children of Israel. Near the end of their journey to Canaan, they engaged in much fighting with certain nations on the east side of the Jordan. Some idea of this fighting may be had by reading Num. 21:21-35; 31:1-12. When all that territory was subdued, and before Israel crossed the Jordan, "the children of Gad and the children of Reuben," because they had much cattle, and the conquered territory east of the Jordan was good land for grazing, said to Moses, "If we have found favor in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession; bring us not over the Jordan." Half of the tribe of Manasseh were included in this petition. Moses would not hear to any such arrangement until they gave him assurance that they would leave their families in these lands, and go over Jordan and help subdue the country, and not return to their selected territory until Canaan was subdued. (Num. 32.) This arrangement left only nine tribes and the other half-tribe of Manasseh to be permanent settlers in Canaan. How Joshua and the people crossed the Jordan and subdued the land is told in the first twelve chapters of the book of Joshua. And yet we learn from Josh. 13:1-7, that some of the promised land had not been possessed. Jehovah said to Joshua, "Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes, and the half-tribe of Manasseh." Chapter 13:8 to the close of chapter 19 tells of dividing the country, so that each tribe would occupy a separate territory. Chapter 20 tells about the cities of refuge, and the use to be made of them. The tribe of Levi had no territory allotted to them; chapter 21 tells of the many cities that were given them. Chapter 22 tells of the return of the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half of the Manassehites to the east side of the Jordan. By consulting an appropriate map the student will see how the whole territory was divided for the different tribes.

After all matters were adjusted, as outlined in previous chapters, there came a rest period of many days. This gave the aged Joshua

time to rest from his long, arduous work, and it also gave the people time to get settled in their new homes. Then Joshua called a meeting, especially of the leaders and officers, for the purpose of giving them encouragement and some final instructions. He had been a great leader and general, but his days of activity were over. "I am old and well stricken in years." Joshua was a humble and modest man, and claimed no credit for all the things that had been done under his leadership. Said he, "Ye have seen all that Jehovah your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for Jehovah your God, he it is that hath fought for you." The people were likely to think that their great leader had done wonders for them, but Joshua gave them to understand that Jehovah, not he, had given them victory over their enemies. It was good for the people to be led to believe that success comes from Jehovah, and not from the greatness of any man. To the extent people put their trust in a man, to that extent their trust in Jehovah is weakened. "Thus saith Jehovah: Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from Jehovah." (Jet. 17:5.) Joshua did not tell them not to trust in him; but he gave them to understand that Jehovah was the source of all the success that had come to them. Their successes were not due to him nor to their own valor.

### **Jehovah Would Give Them Further Success (Verses 4, 5)**

Not all the peoples had been driven out of the land promised to Israel, but sufficient territory had been cleared to give them homes. Some enemies therefore were included in the territories allotted to different tribes. "Behold, I have allotted unto you these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes." But Jehovah did not mean for these enemies to remain in undisturbed possession of the territory they then occupied. "And Jehovah your God, he will thrust them out from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as Jehovah your God spake unto you." But even this was not an unconditional promise, as the next verse shows: "Therefore be ye very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left." Then Joshua said in this same speech, "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." (Verse 14.) But he gives this warning for their future: "When ye transgress the covenant of Jehovah your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods, and bow down yourselves to them; then will the anger of Jehovah be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you." (Verse 16.)

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

The best and bravest of men sometimes need encouragement. Joshua was a great man and a brave and courageous leader; but because he needed encouragement Jehovah gave him much encouragement. Elders in the churches today need much encouragement, but they get more adverse criticism than encouragement. It should not so be.

The great men of the Bible were men of great faith. They exalted

the word of God as man's only guide. None of God's approved servants ever taught anyone that he could disregard, or count lightly, any of God's commands. Every word, every command, of God was sacred to these approved servants of God.

One thing is too often overlooked, namely, that God is as faithful to punish the wicked and disobedient as he is to bless the obedient. While it is true that God is love, it is none the less true that our God is a consuming fire. Let us beware, lest we forget.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Moses the servant of Jehovah.  
Joshua the successor of Moses.  
The land promise conditional.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Under what circumstances did Joshua first come into notice?  
How long did the children of Israel remain at Sinai?  
Why were they condemned to wander in the wilderness, and for how long?  
Tell about the selection of Joshua for leader and the charge given him.

#### Verses 1-4

How old was Moses when he died, and what was his physical condition?  
What was Joshua's equipment for leader?  
Did God give them the land of Canaan without conditions?

#### Verses 5-9

Discuss the words of encouragement in verses 5 and 6.  
Discuss the requirements of verses 7 and 8.  
What would be the result of obedience?

#### Josh. 23:1-3

Tell about the request made by the Reubenites and the Gadites.  
On what condition was their request granted?  
Discuss verses 1-3.

#### Verses 4, 5

The enemies that remained, what was to be done with them?  
What promise did God make concerning them, and on what condition?  
Discuss verses 14 and 16.  
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson II—July 9, 1944

### TAKING POSSESSION OF CANAAN

Josh. 14:6-14; Judges 1:20, 21

6 Then the children of Judah drew nigh unto Judah in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that Jehovah spake unto Moses the man of God concerning me and concerning thee in Kadesh-barnea.

7 Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of Jehovah sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land: and I brought him word again as it was in my heart.

8 Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt; but I wholly followed Jehovah my God.

9 And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy foot hath trodden shall be an inheritance to thee and to thy children for ever, because thou hast wholly followed Jehovah my God.

10 And now, behold, Jehovah hath kept me alive, as he spake, these forty and five years, from the time that Jehovah spake this word unto Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old.

11 As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, and to go out and to come in.

12 Now therefore give me this hill-country, whereof Jehovah spake in

that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakim were there, and cities great and fortified: it may be that Jehovah will be with me, and I shall drive them out, as Jehovah spake.

13 And Joshua blessed him; and he gave Hebron unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance.

14 Therefore Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite unto this day; because that he wholly followed Jehovah, the God of Israel.

20 And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moses had spoken: and he drove out thence the three sons of Anak.

21 And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Thou hast wholly followed Jehovah." (Josh. 14:9.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Psalm 47.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

July 3. M	The Fall of Jericho (Josh. 6:12-21)
July 4. T	The Land Is Divided (Josh. 14:1-5)
July 5. W	Caleb's Faithfulness Rewarded (Josh. 14:6-14)
July 6. T	The Tabernacle Set Up (Josh. 18:1-7)
July 7. F	The Cities of Refuge (Josh. 20:1-9)
July 8. S	The Righteous Man's Reward (Psalm 15:1-5)
July 9. S	God the King of the Earth (Psalm 47:1-9)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—According to Usher, 1445 B.C.; according to Hales, 1602 B.C.

*Place.*—Gilgal. Immediately after crossing the Jordan the children of Israel "encamped in Gilgal, on the east border of Jericho." (Josh. 4:19.) Gilgal seems to have continued to be their headquarters during their wars of conquest, and continued to be an important city with them for many years.

*Persons.*—Caleb, Joshua, and the people of Judah.

*Lesson Links.*—Caleb the son of Jephunneh first appears in the thirteenth chapter of Numbers. He was one of the twelve spies that were sent to spy out the land of Canaan. He represented the tribe of Judah. When the spies returned to Kadesh-barnea, whence they had been sent, they brought a glowing report of the land. They described it as a land flowing with milk and honey, a figurative expression indicating the abundance of its good things; but ten of the spies said Israel could not take the land, because the inhabitants were giants and lived in fortified cities. Caleb and Joshua did not agree with the other ten spies; but urged that they go up at once and possess the land, for they were well able to do so. But the people, forgetting what Jehovah had done to the Egyptians, sided with the majority of the spies, and said, "Our wives and our little ones will be a prey: were it not better for us to return into Egypt?" But Caleb and Joshua urged immediate invasion of the land. "If Jehovah delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it unto us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not against Jehovah, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is removed from over them, and Jehovah is with us: fear them not." Jehovah had promised them the land, and had also promised repeatedly that he would drive the nations out before them. Caleb and Joshua believed Jehovah;

the ten other spies and the people did not believe Jehovah. "But all the congregation bade stone them with stones." But the glory of Jehovah appeared in the tent of meeting, and this seems to have stopped the people from crying out their murderous intentions. Jehovah then said to the people, "Your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, that have murmured against me, surely ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear that I would make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, that ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have rejected. But as for you, your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness." The whole period of their wandering in the wilderness was forty years, a year for each of the forty days the spies were engaged in spying out the land.

Aside from its religious value, the book of Joshua is interesting history. Just from that point it is well worth reading. The student should read all the book that precedes the printed section of our lesson, if he would get the most out of the lesson.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### **Caleb and the Children of Judah Appear Before Joshua (Verse 6)**

The incident told in this lesson occurred seven or eight years after the children of Israel crossed the river Jordan. These had been years of hard fighting, years of continuous action in driving their enemies out of the land which God had given them; and there were yet many enemies to be subdued. (Josh. 13:1-7.) But they had conquered sufficient territory for their immediate needs; each tribe had begun to take possession of its allotted territory. "As Jehovah commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did; and they divided the land." (Verse 5.) The student should consult the map to see what territory was allotted to each tribe, and also the district of country given to Caleb. It is probable that Caleb was not of the seed of Abraham; if not, he was a proselyte and had attached himself to the tribe of Judah. He represented the tribe of Judah when the twelve went to spy out the land. (Num. 13:1-6.) His possessions would therefore be in the territory allotted to the tribe of Judah. When he came to Joshua to make his plea for a certain possession, men of his tribe came with him. They knew that Joshua would want to know if it was satisfactory with the whole tribe for Caleb to have the possession he desired. For his faithful reporting Jehovah had promised to give him the land he had spied out. (Num. 14:24.) Some of the district Caleb desired had not yet been cleared of enemies.

#### **Caleb Gives Reasons for His Request (Verses 7-11)**

Caleb was forty years old when the land of promise was spied out. In verse 10 he says, "Lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old." As the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness thirty-seven or thirty-eight years after the land was spied out, Caleb was seventy-seven or seventy-eight years of age when they crossed the Jordan. They had therefore been engaged seven or eight years in this war

of conquest. Joshua must have been near a hundred years old at the time of the crossing. Hence among that vast throng that crossed the Jordan Caleb and Joshua were the only two over sixty years old. Caleb was a man of courage. The giants in the land which he spied out did not frighten him; neither did the murderous -clamoring of his own people move him. He made a sincere report to Moses. "And I brought him word again as it was in my heart." To be able to make such a report he had had to make careful observations and to be cool in judgment. The size of the giants had not frightened him. Excitement or fright frequently causes the imagination to warp the judgment. A man who cannot view things without excitement, passion, or prejudice does not see things as they really are. The ten spies were cowards; their fears caused them to have such an exaggerated opinion of the strength of the people of the land. Said they, "The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature . . . and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." (Num. 13:32, 33.) But Caleb and Joshua had made a true report, and urged an immediate invasion of the land. "Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt; but I wholly followed Jehovah my God." The ten spies and the people lacked faith in Jehovah. This lack of faith caused their fears, and in their fears they blamed Jehovah for their imagined disasters. "Wherefore doth Jehovah bring us unto this land, to fall by the sword?" (Num. 14:3.) Caleb's faith in Jehovah and his promises enabled him to say truthfully, "But I wholly followed Jehovah my God." And Caleb was not boasting; he was making a true report. He had evidence besides his own word to sustain him in what he was saying. "And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy foot hath trodden shall be an inheritance to thee and to thy children for ever, because thou hast wholly followed Jehovah my God." Thirty-seven or thirty-eight years after the spies made their report, Moses quoted Jehovah as saying on that occasion, "Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see the good land, which I swear to give unto your fathers, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it; and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed Jehovah." (Deut. 1:35, 36.) The statement, so often repeated, that Caleb wholly followed Jehovah should impress us with the importance of doing that very thing. As Caleb received special blessings for so doing, so may we. It has been said that the promise to give the land of Canaan to Abraham and his seed after him was an unconditional promise; and yet about two millions of his seed failed to enter Canaan because of their sins, and so even did Moses. The land Caleb wanted was still in the hands of the enemies; at least a part of it was. But Caleb was not seeking an easy place; he did not mean to shirk any responsibility. Though he was eighty-five years old, he could still do a man's part; he could truthfully say, "As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, and to go out and to come in." He was not a weakling, seeking to avoid hardships. He did not attribute his long life and strong body to his own habits of life, but to the providence of God—God had kept him alive so as to fulfill to him his promise. With



gratitude in his heart to God for his goodness he was ready with unabated zeal, courage, and strength to go on with the war. He was a remarkable man; he was old in years, and yet in full vigor of manhood—strong in body, in mind, in faith, and in courage. Viewed from any angle, he was as good as the best.

### **Caleb's Request (Verse 12)**

In mentioning his faithfulness and strength as a basis for his request, Caleb had built up a good case for himself: "Now therefore give me this hill-country, whereof Jehovah spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakim were there, and cities great and fortified." He knew the land and the people; but their great stature, their fortified cities, and their skill in war had not frightened him. It seems that the incidents of this section of our lesson are mentioned out of their chronological order, for the taking of the hill country was mentioned in chapter 10:36-42, or else these people had reoccupied the country while Israel were fighting farther north. Some had remained in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod. (Josh. 11:21-23.) It seems the more likely that these had returned to their lands while the armies of Israel were fighting to the north. Caleb was not visionary, ready to undertake more than he could do. His trust was in Jehovah: "It may be that Jehovah will be with me, and I shall drive them out, as Jehovah spake." He knew that Jehovah was stronger than giants and fortified cities. If Jehovah was with him, the victory was assured before the battle began. But Caleb well knew that he would have to do his part, else Jehovah would not give him the victory. Jehovah is not with the man who sits and wishes; he is with the man who wills, and works as he directs. Victory comes to those who wholly follow Jehovah. Active faith succeeds; faith only perishes while it sits and waits for victory which never comes.

### **Caleb's Request Granted (Verses 13, 14)**

"And Joshua blessed him"; that is, he either praised him or invoked the blessings of Jehovah upon him, or both. Joshua would certainly pray that Jehovah would bless Caleb in his battles for the possession of the land. "And he gave Hebron unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance." Hebron is one of the oldest existing cities. Its original name was Kiriath-arba, and was a well-known town in the days of Abraham. It is situated about twenty miles south of Jerusalem. Here Sarah died, and was buried in the near-by cave of Machpelah. (Gen. 23:2-20.) And here also Abraham was buried. (Gen. 25:8-10.) With Hebron went the smaller towns surrounding Hebron; Hebron was the chief city of the section given to Caleb. And this section, this hill country, was in the district allotted to the tribe of Judah. Caleb was therefore within the territory of his tribe. A little added bit of interesting history of Caleb and his possession is found in Josh. 15:13-19. It appears that Debit was a difficult city to take; it was formerly called Kiriath-sepher. "And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kiriath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife." That offer was certain to procure for his daughter a man of ability and courage. "And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife."

**Judges 1:20, 21**

Caleb drove out of Hebron the three sons of Anak. Josh. 15:14; "And Caleb drove out thence the three sons of Anak: Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmi, the children of Anak." But Benjamin did not succeed so well in driving the Jebusites out of Jerusalem; "but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day." This shows that the book of Judges was written before the days of David, for David drove the Jebusites out of Jerusalem; or rather, it seems that he destroyed them. (2 Sam. 5:6-9.) And so, after David's capture of their portion of Jerusalem, the Jebusites dwelt with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem no more; but they had lived with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem for a period of about four hundred years.

**SOME REFLECTIONS**

Why do men lack courage? why are they cowards? What is courage? Is it fearlessness? Any coward can stand at his post of duty when he is not afraid, or scared; but it takes a man of courage to stay with his duty when he is scared half to death. If the cause for which a man stands means more to him than life, he will stay with it in the face of the greatest danger? A keen sense of duty and a high appreciation of the worth of a cause will give courage to a timid man. Men of courage and faith are the only worth-while men in this world of ours. Schemers and timeservers may gain popularity by dodging issues, but they are really worth nothing to any cause.

Jehovah's blessings are for those who are prepared for them. Hebron as a gift would have been worthless to the cowards who rebelled at going up to take possession of Canaan. A gift is not a blessing to a person who does not know how to use it, or is too lazy and indifferent to make use of it. Next to giving his Son to die for us, the greatest gift of God to man is the Bible; but to how many is it a real blessing? How many really know how to use it? How many really know why God gave it to us? What use do you make of this great gift.

**TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION**

What it means to wholly follow Jehovah.  
A study of 1 Cor. 10:1-12.  
The need of faith and courage today.

**QUESTIONS**

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

**Lesson Settings**

Give time, place, and persons.  
Where do we first learn of Caleb, and under what circumstances?  
Tell about the spies and their report.  
Discuss the results of their report.

**Verse 6**

To what tribe did Caleb belong?  
What had Jehovah promised Caleb, and why?

**Verses 7-11**

How old was Joshua at this time, and how old when he was sent as a spy?  
What did Caleb say about his report to Moses?  
What enabled Caleb to make such a report?  
On what did all the spies agree, and on what did they differ?  
Show that the land of Canaan was not an unconditional gift.

**Verse 12**

On what did Caleb base the justness of his request?

Why did Caleb think he could conquer the district he wanted?

**Verses 13, 14**

What territory did Caleb want?  
 What was the original name of Hebron?  
 Where is Hebron located?  
 What notables were buried there?

What promise did Caleb make, and who won?

**Judges 1:20, 21**

What three important people did Caleb drive out of his possession?  
 What is said of Benjamin and the Jebusites?  
 When were they conquered, and by whom?  
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson III—July 16, 1944

**SUCSESSES AND FAILURES OF ISRAEL**

Judges 2:6-16

6 Now when Joshua had sent the people away, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land.

7 And the people served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of Jehovah that he had wrought for Israel.

8 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Jehovah, died, being a hundred and ten years old.

9 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the hill-country of Ephraim, on the north of the mountain of Gaash.

10 And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, that knew not Jehovah, nor yet the work which he had wrought for Israel.

11 And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and served the Baalim;

12 And they forsook Jehovah, the God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the peoples that were round about them, and bowed themselves down unto them: and they provoked Jehovah to anger.

13 And they forsook Jehovah, and served Baal and the Ashtaroath.

14 And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that despoiled them; and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.

15 Whithersoever they went out, the hand of Jehovah was against them for evil, as Jehovah had spoken, and as Jehovah had sworn unto them: and they were sore distressed.

16 And Jehovah raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those that despoiled them.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people." (Prov. 14:34.).

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Psalm 138.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

July 10. M

Failure Through Disobedience (Judges 2:1-5)

July 11. T

Failure Through Idolatry (Judges 2:11-15)

July 12. W

Israel Tested (Judges 2:16-23)

July 13. T

Conditions of National Blessedness (Psalm 33:12-22)

July 14. F

National Wickedness Punished (Ezek. 5:1-9)

July 15. S

Prayer for God's Mercy and Peace (Psalm 85:1-13)

July 16. S

Prayers for Rulers (1 Tim. 2:1-?)

**LESSON SETTINGS**

*Time.*—This lesson is really a summary of the whole period of the rule of the judges. According to Usher this period extended from 1406 B.C. to 1095 B.C.; according to Hales, from 1572 B.C. to 1110 B.C. We cannot therefore be certain about these ancient dates.

*Place.*—Canaan, the land of promise.

*Persons.*—Jehovah, Joshua, the children of Israel, and their judges.

*Lesson Links.*—The following excerpts are copied from the "Bible Encyclopedia and Scriptural Dictionary," for it seems that they answer well for this section of our lesson:

"The term Judges, used in the English Bibles, does not exactly represent the original Hebrew shophetim, i.e., 'rulers of the people.' The station and office of these shophetim are involved in great obscurity, partly from the want of clear intimations in the history in which their exploits and government are recorded, and partly from the absence of parallels in the history of other nations, by which our nations might be assisted. In fact the government of the judges forms the most singular part of Hebrew institutions, and that which appears most difficult to comprehend." "It is usual to consider them as commencing their career with military exploits to deliver Israel from foreign oppression; but this is by no means invariably the case. Eli and Samuel were not military men; Deborah judged Israel before she planned the war against Jabin; and Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, it is at least uncertain whether they ever held any military command. The command of the army can therefore scarcely be considered the distinguishing characteristic of these men, or military exploits the necessary introduction to the office." "The office of judges or regents was held during life, but it was not hereditary, neither could they appoint their successors. Their authority was limited by the law alone; and in doubtful cases they were directed to consult the Divine King through the priest by Urim and Thummim (Num. 27:21)." "They bore no external marks of dignity, and maintained no retinue of courtiers, though some of them were very opulent. They were not only simple in their manners, moderate in their desires, and free from avarice and ambition, but noble and magnanimous men, who felt that whatever they did for their country was above all reward, and could not be recompensed; who desired merely to promote the public good, and who chose rather to deserve well of their country than to be enriched by its wealth. This exalted patriotism, like everything else connected with politics in the theoretical state of the Hebrews, was partly of a religious character, and those regents always conducted themselves as the officers of God; in all their enterprises they relied upon him, and their only care was that their countrymen should acknowledge the authority of Jehovah, their invisible King."

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### **The People Served Jehovah for a Time (Verses 6, 7)**

Before studying the text of our lesson the student should read chapter 1 and chapter 2:1-5. It will be seen that the book of Judges connects directly with the book of Joshua. Again you will read that the children of Israel did not drive all the idolatrous people out of the land, as God had commanded them to do. "And the angel of Jehovah came up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you: and ye shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall break down their altars. But ye have not hearkened unto my voice: why have ye done this? Wherefore I also said, I

will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you. And it came to pass, when the angel of Jehovah spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept. And they called the name of that place Bochim: and they sacrificed there unto Jehovah." (Verses 1-5.) For the term "angel" in verse 1 the marginal reading has, "Or, a messenger." It does not seem possible that this refers to a heavenly being, for it is said that he came up from Gilgal. He was more likely a prophet whom the Lord sent from Gilgal with a message of rebuke to the children of Israel for their failure to drive the heathen out of the promised land. What the place to which he came had been formerly called we are not informed. Bochim, the marginal reading informs us, means "weepers." It was given that name because the people of Israel wept there.

When Joshua had finished his speech as recorded in Josh. 24, he sent the people away. "Now when Joshua had sent the people away, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land." The people who crossed the Jordan into Canaan, and who had been old enough during their wanderings in the wilderness to be impressed with the wonders Jehovah performed during their wanderings, continued to serve Jehovah until death overtook them. "And the people served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of Jehovah that he had wrought for Israel." It is very likely that some of these elders did not die until many years after the death of Joshua. Verse 7 is a repetition of the facts told in Josh. 24:31. These elders that outlived Joshua were able to lead the people in the right way so long as they lived. For a time after this it seems that no man or group of men had sufficient influence to keep the people from drifting into idolatry.

#### **Joshua's Death and Burial (Verses 8, 9)**

Verses 8 and 9 repeat what was told in Josh. 24:29, 30. We are not told how long Caleb lived, but Joshua died at the age of one hundred ten. According to chronologists Joshua died twelve or fifteen years after he led the children of Israel across the Jordan into the land of promise. This event occurred forty years after Moses led the people out of Egypt across the Red Sea. The student can therefore see that Joshua was about fifty-five years old when he came out of Egypt, and about ninety-five years old when he crossed the Jordan into Canaan. As all, save Caleb and Joshua, who were twenty years old when they left Egypt, died in the wilderness, it will be seen that none of them were over sixty years old when they crossed into Canaan. Joshua was therefore about thirty-five years older than the elders that outlived him. As Joshua was of the tribe of Ephraim, his possessions were within the territory of that tribe. "And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill-country of Ephraim, on the north of the mountain of Gaash."

#### **The People Forsook Jehovah (Verses 10-13)**

All that were old enough to be impressed with the works of Jehovah in the wilderness wanderings passed away. The generations

that followed had not seen these wonderful works. In their materialistic thinking Jehovah, the invisible King, was too far off, and they did not like his demands for self-restraint and righteous living; they wanted gods that they could see, and that would not interfere with their preferred way of living. The religion of the heathen whom they should have driven out was more to their liking. Hence the gods of these nations became a snare to them—caught them, as Jehovah had said they would. And these verses do not refer exclusively to the generation that followed the death of the elders that were Joshua's associates, but to at least the whole period of the judges. We need not conclude that all the people went after the gods of these nations. It is possible that some of the tribes were never much affected by these departures until Rehoboam led in the revolt and in the consequent corruption of the ten tribes. Not long after the death of the elders who had seen the works of Jehovah in the wilderness, some of the children of Israel began to follow their evil course of forsaking Jehovah for the worship of the heathen nations. It is not likely that a great number began at the same time to forsake Jehovah for the heathen gods. More likely some who lived near the heathen worshipers began to adopt the worship of idols, and the defection then spread, as does a contagious disease. That is the usual course of all departures from God. Even when a judge brought the people out of the worship of idols and recovered them from their enemies, they soon went back to the worshiping of idols. "And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and served the Baalim." Baalim is the plural of Baal. "The word 'baalim' signifies 'lords.' Their false gods they considered supernatural rulers or governors, each having his peculiar district and office; but when they wished to express a particular baal, they generally added some particular epithet, as Baal-zephon, Baal-peor, Baal-zebul, Baal-shamayim, etc., as Calmet has well observed. The two former were adored by the Moabites; Baal-zebul by the Ekronites. Baal-berith was honored at Shechem; and Baal-shamayim, the lord or ruler of the heavens, was adored among the Phoenicians, Syrians, Chaldeans, etc. And whenever the word baal is used without an epithet, this is the god that is intended; and probably among all these people, it meant the sun."—Clarke. It seems that Ashtoreth was the corresponding goddess. To emphasize the enormity of Israel's sin, the writer says, "They forsook Jehovah, the God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the peoples that were round about them, and bowed themselves down unto them." is it any wonder that such conduct provoked Jehovah to anger? "And they forsook Jehovah, and served Baal and the Ashtaroath." Would Jehovah let such sins go unpunished? He had told them what he would do, if they departed from him.

### **Their Sins Bring Punishment Upon Themselves (Verses 14, 15)**

In the ten commandments Jehovah had commanded these children of Israel not to indulge in any form of idolatry. That warning was repeated many times, and in various ways. He had warned them of the dire calamities that would come upon them if they forsook him for anything else. His favor meant great blessings and prosperity;

his anger meant sore punishment. They had their choice. These matters are set forth at length in chapters 28, 29, 30, of the book of Deuteronomy. Jehovah makes no idle threats, nor false promises. It is so easy for people to think their way is better than Jehovah's way. "And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that despoiled them; and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies." And these enemies were the very people whose religion they had adopted. These nations were enemies of Jehovah as well as of Israel. The men of Israel had been trying to court the favor of their enemies and Jehovah's enemies; that cannot be done without bringing trouble. "Whithersoever they went out, the hand of Jehovah was against them for evil, as Jehovah had spoken, and as Jehovah had sworn unto them." He was dealing justly with them; he had given them fair warning. Now they often reaped the fruits of their own doings. The words of these verses did not apply to only one departure from the Lord, but to all departures that occurred among them, especially during the period of the judges. Whenever they departed from Jehovah, their enemies moved in upon them; and their enemies were not merciful enemies. They overran the land and seized what they could find.

### **Jehovah Raised Up Judges (Verse 16)**

"And Jehovah raised up judges." The rule of the judges was not a continuous thing; God raised them up when they were needed, and when the condition of the people made it possible for them to be of any service. When the people were overrun by their enemies, and could find no relief, and then cried unto Jehovah for relief, Jehovah then raised up a judge who "saved them." But God does not give deliverance to any who remain stubborn and rebellious. When they turned away from their evil practices, the Lord removed the evils with which he was afflicting them. Verse 17: "And yet they hearkened not unto their judges; for they played the harlot after other gods, and bowed themselves down unto them." Verse 18: "And when Jehovah raised them up judges, then Jehovah was with the judge, and saved them out of the hand of theft enemies all the days of the judge." Verse 19: "But it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they turned back, and dealt more corruptly than theft fathers." All this shows that our present lesson was not dealing with any particular case, but with the conduct of the children of Israel all the days of the judges. No specific case is mentioned until we reach the seventh verse of the third chapter.

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

They forsook Jehovah; they did not merely neglect him. They gave him up, abandoned him, for the service of idols. There is quite a difference between neglecting and forsaking. A man might neglect to do some things for his family, or even his stock, without forsaking them. The atheist, the rebellious, and the indifferent do neither. Forsaking implies a complete severance of former relations; neglecting is failing to give proper attention, though that might be only occasional. To forsake is to abandon, to give up, to quit entirely. Israel had served Jehovah; in fact, they did so to some extent under

the leadership of every judge; but when the judge died, they soon forsook Jehovah—they abandoned him for the worship of idols. They did not neglect; they quit. Christians sometimes neglect certain things they should do without forsaking the Lord. Paul admonished the Hebrew Christians not to forsake the assembling of themselves together.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Obedience and its reward.  
Disobedience and its consequences.  
Neglecting and forsaking.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
Discuss the functions of the judges.

#### Verses 6, 7

Wherein did Israel fail to carry out God's orders?  
Who broke God's covenant with Israel?  
How long did the children of Israel continue to serve Jehovah after Joshua died?

#### Verses 8, 9

What was Joshua's age at his death?  
About how old was Joshua when he came out of Egypt?  
Excepting Caleb and Joshua, how old was the oldest person to cross the Jordan?

To what tribe did Joshua belong?

#### Verses 10-13

What occurred after the death of the elders associated with Joshua?  
Into what did the people drift?  
Tell about Baal.

#### Verses 14, 15

Wherein had they violated the ten commandments and other warnings?  
What punishment was visited upon them?  
What shows that this lesson does not deal with any specific case?

#### Verse 16

Discuss verses 16 to 18.  
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IV—July 23, 1944

### WOMAN'S PART IN NATIONAL LIFE

Judges 4:1-9, 13-16

1 And the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, when Ehud was dead.

2 And Jehovah sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles.

3 And the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.

4 Now Deborah a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, she judged Israel at that time.

5 And she dwelt under the palm-tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill-country of Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.

6 And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphthli, and said unto him, Hath not Jehovah, the God of Israel, commanded, saying, Go and draw unto mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphthli and of the children of Zebulun?

7 And I will draw unto thee, to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thy hand.

8 And Barak said unto her, If thou writ go with me, then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, I will not go.

9 And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding, the Journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honor; for Jehovah will sell Sisera



into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kadesh.

13 And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles, unto the river Kishon.

14 And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day ill which Jehovah hath delivered Sisera into thy hand; is not Jehovah gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him.

15 And Jehovah discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from his chariot, and fled away on his feet.

16 But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; there was not a man left.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Psalm 20.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

July 17. M

Deborah Counsels Barak (Judges 4:1-9)

July 18. T

Deborah and Barak Deliver Israel (Judges 4:10-16)

July 19. W

A Mother of Nations (Gen. 17:15-19)

July 20. T

A Woman's Gift to the Nation (1 Sam. 1:21-28)

July 21. F

A Faithful Daughter (Ruth 2:8-13)

July 22. S

The Mother of a Great Son (Luke 1:8-17)

July 23. S

A Worthy Woman (Prov. 31:10-20)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—According to Usher, 1296 B.C.; according to Hales, 1406 B.C.

*Places.*—Deborah's home, between Ramah and Bethel; Barak lived in Kedesh, in the territory of Naphtali. Here Barak assembled his army. From there he went to Mount Tabor to await an opportune time for battle. The battle was fought in the plain at the foot of Mount Tabor.

*Persons.*—Deborah, Barak and his army, and Sisera and his army. Lesson Links.—If there were no temptations, and people were irresistibly driven to do only that which was right, then people would be mere machines. There would then be no development of character in them any more than in the material machines they use. People develop good characters by doing right in spite of temptations and adverse conditions and circumstances. A temptation is a snare only to the one who yields to it; it is a means of development to the one who overcomes it. The idol worshiping nations that were not driven out of Canaan were a constant snare to Israel, their idol worship a perpetual temptation. If they had resisted the temptation, they would have grown stronger in character and stronger to resist their enemies, for Jehovah would have been with them; but they yielded to temptation, and became weak, an easy prey for their enemies. Chapter 3, verses 7 and 8, tells of their first plunge into idolatry and of their being punished by being subdued by the king of Mesopotamia, whom they served eight years. "And when the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah, Jehovah raised up a saviour to the children of Israel, who saved them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. And the Spirit of Jehovah came upon him, and he judged Israel; and he went out to war, and Jehovah

delivered Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand: and his hand prevailed against Cushan-rishathaim. And the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died." Again Israel fell into sin, and were subdued by Eglon the king of Moab, whom they served eighteen years. "But when the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah, Jehovah raised them up a saviour, Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjamite, a man left-handed." He utterly destroyed Eglon's army. "And the land had rest fourscore years." It seems that God's people did not remain true to him more than a generation at a time. It might seem to some that they were so weak and rebellious that Jehovah would have discarded them entirely; but he was working out his great plan for redemption through Christ, and the children of Israel, the children of Abraham, were the best material he had to work with. None of the other nations served him at all. God works his own plans in his own way; we should believe that he knows best what to do.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### **King Jabin Subdues Israel (Verses 1-3)**

The expression, "And the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah," is a statement so frequently found in the history of Israel that we are constantly reminded that human nature is frail, and that man is an unstable creature. They would fall into sin, be overcome by some enemy, cry to Jehovah, and he would deliver them, and again they would plunge into sin. It seems that they would have learned by experience that when they obeyed Jehovah they prospered, and when they departed from him they fell into the hands of their enemies. Shamgar had but recently delivered them from the Philistines, but this may have been a local engagement in the territory further south of some tribe not now overrun by the hosts of Jabin; or Shamgar slew the Philistines after Ehud became too old to be active in battle. And it is possible that the children of Israel began to drift away from Jehovah before Ehud died, but after he became too old to be their active leader, and sank deeper into sin after he died. "And Jehovah sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan." Hazor, king Jabin's capitol city, was in the territory allotted to the tribe of Naphtali. The captain of Jabin's hosts was Sisera, whose city, Harosheth, was in the territory allotted to the tribe of Zebulun. Harosheth is called a city of the Gentiles, because so many mixed races lived there. Israel had never driven the worshipers of idols out of that city. Jabin was a tyrant; he and his retinue and Sisera and his army were living off the people they had conquered. "And the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel." But Jehovah had given Israel warning in abundance as to what would befall them if they departed from him. Each time they departed from Jehovah they fell into the hands of their enemies, and the oppressions of their enemies caused them to cry unto Jehovah for relief. It required twenty years of Jabin's bitter oppression to bring them to their senses and make them realize their need of Jehovah. Jehovah heard their cry, as he always did when his people in their distress turned to him; but he gave them no relief so long as they continued in their rebellious ways.

### **Deborah the Judge and Prophetess (Verses 4, 5)**

Deborah was both a prophetess and a judge. As a prophetess she was an inspired teacher. Inspiration does not come by accident. In giving one the spirit of inspiration God is working out a definite purpose. Deborah was inspired because Jehovah had a work for her to do, a mission for her to fulfill. As the people learned that she spoke by inspiration, they would naturally turn to her for advice, and to have her settle their disputes; for it is likely that a great many of the people had not followed their leaders off into the worship of idols. Because of this inspiration she gained power and influence as a judge. It may be that Jabin had not extended his conquests as far south as Deborah's immediate territory; for Issachar and Manasseh lay between Ephraim, the home territory of Deborah, and Zebulun, the territory in which Jabin's army was located. Jabin had not interfered with Deborah's activities; as a prophetess she was interested in all things that pertained to the affairs of the children of Israel: "And she dwelt under the palm-tree of Deborah between Ramah and Beth-el in the hill-country of Ephraim." For "dwelt" the marginal reading has "sat." Leeser, a learned Jew, translates it thus: "And she held her sitting under the palm-tree of Deborah." It was her place for holding court. Here the people came to her for teaching and for judgment. Had not Deborah been a woman of great wisdom and strength of character, Jehovah would not have used her as prophetess and leader of Israel. In her work as prophetess and judge she must have been kept busy in the most trying and exacting service one could be called upon to do.

### **Deborah Calls Barak to Lead Israel in War (Verses 6, 7)**

Israel was growing restless under the oppression of Jabin; they had borne his oppression a long time. But so long as they did not turn from their evil ways, Jehovah could do nothing for them. He helps those who want his help. Up in the territory occupied by Jabin and his hosts lived a man named Barak; his home was at Kedesh in Naphtali. Kedesh was but a short distance north of the city in which Jabin had his headquarters. It seems that Naphtali and Zebulun were now ready to be delivered from Jabin's oppressions. Deborah doubtless acting by inspiration of God sent for Barak, "and said unto him, Hath not Jehovah, the God of Israel, commanded, saying, Go and draw unto Mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun?" Naphtali and Zebulun were adjoining territories. As King Jabin had his headquarters in Naphtali, and Sisera and the army were stationed in Zebulun, these tribes would suffer the worst from Jabin's tyranny and his army of occupation, and would therefore be most ready to fight the intruders. Of course Sisera sent out bands of soldiers over the country to gather up whatever they needed, and these marauders would show no consideration for the needs of the people. Barak was commanded to gather his army, and bring it to Mount Tabor. On that mount they could organize, and prepare for the coming battle. Sisera would not attack him there, if he could possibly lure Barak away from the mount; for Sisera's chariots of iron would not function well in such territory. Barak would wait for Sisera to move his army into the valley of Kishon, and then at an opportune time come down upon them in a

surprise attack. To encourage Barak to fight Sisera and his vast army so well equipped, which would ordinarily seem to be a hopeless task, Jehovah said, "And I will draw unto thee, to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thy hand." This should have been all the assurance Barak needed.

### **Deborah Agrees to Go with Barak to War (Verses 8, 9)**

Even after Jehovah promised Barak complete triumph over Sisera, Barak said to Deborah, "If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, I will not go." Jehovah's command and assurance were not enough. He was showing a lack of faith in Jehovah and a lack of respect for Jehovah's command. He was naming the conditions on which he would do what Jehovah commanded; but even so, he was doubtless the best man that could be found for the work to be done; Jehovah was using the best material at hand. But Barak should have known that Jehovah would fulfill his word without Deborah's presence. The crisis was great, and Deborah agreed to go. She did not stop to consider her own comfort and safety, for she was willing to do what she could to free her people from the intolerable tyranny of Jabin. But she said to Barak by way of prophecy, "The journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honor; for Jehovah will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." By reading verses 17-22 the student will see how Sisera met death at the hands of a woman, though the woman was not Deborah. Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh, and there they gathered an army of ten thousand out of Naphtali and Zebulun, the tribes that were being overrun by Jabin's hosts. It is strange that they could gather an army within something like an hour's walk from the city of the king, and he not know anything about it. And had Sisera been watchful he would have known that many thousands were being gathered out of Zebulun. But the king and his general had the country so subdued that they thought no uprising was possible.

### **Sisera's Army Destroyed (Verses 13-16)**

Jabin and Sisera were so confident that no uprising was possible that they had out no spies, for Barak was on Mount Tabor before Sisera knew there was any trouble brewing. When he was told what had occurred, he "gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him." It was a great army, fully equipped, led by an experienced commander. They had no doubt but that they could easily overcome an army of inexperienced men poorly equipped. They felt no need to hurry, and it seems that they encamped in the valley of the Kishon near the foot of Mount Tabor. At the proper moment Deborah said to Barak, "Up; for this is the day in which Jehovah hath delivered Sisera into thy hand; is not Jehovah gone out before thee?" Deborah had a way of making a statement in the form of a question; and her statement gave Barak and his army full assurance that a complete victory would be theirs. Sisera would not expect Barak with his poorly equipped army to come down and fight him in the open plain of the Kishon. This gave Barak the advantage of a surprise attack. The following from Deborah's song of victory indicates that a storm broke upon them as the attack was made: "From heaven fought the

stars, from their courses they fought against Sisera. The river Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. O my soul, march on with strength. Then did the horsehoofs stamp by reason of the prancings, the prancings of their strong ones." Josephus testifies to the same effect. He tells us that the wind and the rain beat in the faces of Sisera and his army so that they could not see to fight; but it did not hinder the Hebrews, for it was against their backs. The horses to the chariots stampeded, and did great damage to Sisera's army. Many of his soldiers perished in floodwaters of the Kishon. So testifies Josephus. Of course the iron chariots were put in the front; and when the storm and rain beating in the faces of the horses stampeded them, they ran back through the foot soldiers. We can imagine something of the havoc they wrought; and thus the prized equipment of Sisera's army destroyed some of his own army. He fled on foot, and left the remnants of his army to look out for themselves. Barak pursued the remnants of this once proud army, and destroyed it to the last man; "and all the host of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; there was not a man left." To see the fate that befell Sisera read verses 17 to 22. "So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel. And the hand of the children of Israel prevailed more and more against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan." (Verses 23, 24.)

### SOME REFLECTIONS

In Heb. 11:33 Barak is mentioned as one of the heroes "who through faith subdued kingdoms." But his faith came near not measuring up to the requirements.

We should learn from the example of Israel that to fall away from the Lord is to fall into the hands of the enemy.

Faith in God gives the victory, regardless of numbers on either side; "for there is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few." (1 Sam. 14:6.) Numbers do not intimidate the man of faith. If there are no men of faith, then women must take the lead.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The lesson of Rom. 15:4.  
When must women take the lead?

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Discuss how temptations either destroy or build character.  
Give an account of Othniel and Ehud.

#### Verses 1-3

Discuss verse 1.  
Tell about Jabin and Sisera.  
How long did Jabin oppress Israel?

#### Verses 4, 5

Tell about Deborah.  
What indicates that Jabin had not conquered all

the tribes of Israel?

#### Verses 6, 7

Why had Naphtali and Zebulun been allowed to suffer oppression so long?  
Where did Barak live, and what moved Deborah to send for him?  
Why would Naphtali and Zebulun suffer most from Jabin and his army?  
What did Deborah say to Barak?  
Tell what movements Barak was to make.  
What promise did Jehovah make?

#### Verses 8, 9

What did Barak say about going?  
How did this reply show a wrong attitude toward Jehovah?  
What reply did Deborah give Barak?

**Verses 13-16**

Why did Jabin and Sisera not find out about Barak's movements?  
Tell about the battle, and why it was such a

decisive victory.  
What happened to Sisera, also to his army ?  
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson V—July 30, 1944

**GIDEON'S FAITHFUL FEW**

Judges 7:4-7, 15-21

4 And Jehovah said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, :that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.

5 So he brought down the people unto the water: and Jehovah said unto Gideon, Every one that lapped of the water with his tongue, as a dog lapped, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

6 And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.

7 And Jehovah said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thy hand; and let all the people go every man unto his place.

15 And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped; and he returned into the camp of Israel, and said, Arise; for Jehovah hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian.

16 And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put into the hands of all of them trumpets, and empty pitchers, with torches within the pitchers.

17 And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outermost part of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do.

18 When I blow the trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, For Jehovah and for Gideon.

19 So Gideon, and the hundred men' that were with him, came unto the outermost part of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch, when they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake in pieces the pitchers that were in their hands.

20 And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the torches in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands wherewith to blow; and they cried, The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon.

21 And they stood every man in his place round about the camp; and all the host ran; and they shouted, and put them to flight.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"There is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few." (1 Sam. 14:6.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Psalm 33:12-22.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

July 24. M

July 25. T

July 26. W

July 27. T

July 28. F

July 29. S

July 30. S

A Faithful Leader (Judges 6:25-32)

Faithful Followers (Judges 7:4-8)

Victory Through Faith (Judges 7:15-23)

Jehovah with Us (1 Sam. 14:6-15)

One Man and God (1 Sam. 17:41-49)

The Fearlessness of Faith (Psalm 27:1-5)

More Than Conquerors (Rom. 8:31-39)

**LESSON SETTINGS**

*Time.*—According to Usher, 1245 B.C.; according to Hales, 1359 B.C. It had been forty-seven years since the children of Israel had been

delivered from the tyranny of Jabin king of Canaan by Deborah and Barak; for the land had rest forty years after that deliverance, and they had been oppressed by the Midianites seven years.

*Places.*—Gideon and his army "encamped beside the spring of Harod: and the camp of Midian was on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley" of Jezreel. (Judges 6:33; 7:1.)

*Persons.*—Jehovah, Gideon and his army, and the hosts of Midian. Chapter 6, verse 33, says, "Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east assembled themselves together." The army of the Midianites was a mixed multitude.

*Lesson Links.*—The children of Israel had rest for a period of forty years after they were delivered from the tyranny of Jabin. (Judges 5:31.) But as before, a few years of rest and prosperity brought to them a feeling of self-reliance, and they were ready then to go their own way. "And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah: and Jehovah delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years." (Judges 6:1.) The Midianites were descendants of Abraham by Keturah. (Gen. 25:1, 2.) "The Midianites are described as true Arabs, and possessed cattle and flocks and camels as the sand of the seashore for multitude." They were a greedy and predatory race, gaining much of their living by plundering any people they could overcome. They would want the people they conquered to grow as much crops and cattle as possible; it would be to their interest to let the children of Israel alone until the harvest season. Then it seems they would move in on them with their cattle and herds. "And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance in Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle and their tents; they came in as locusts for multitude; both they and their camels were without number: and they came into the land to destroy it. And Israel was brought very low because of Midian; and the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah." (Judges 6:4-6.) "Destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza"; this shows that Midian had overrun practically the entire country of the children of Israel. This brought these rebellious children of Israel to their senses. In their prosperity they forgot Jehovah; in their adversity they called on him, and he heard their cry. To prepare them for deliverance from Midian, the Lord sent a prophet among them to point out to them the reason for their distressed condition, and to show them the right way. Earlier than this, they would have paid no attention to a prophet. How much of a fight the children of Israel had made before being conquered by Midian we are not told. As their turning away from Jehovah had brought this trouble on themselves, they could remedy their situation only by turning to Jehovah. So testified the prophet.

Jehovah selected Gideon as leader in driving out the Midianites. At the time he was seeking to thresh out and to hide some grain from the Midianites. An angel of Jehovah appeared to him, and addressed him as a mighty man of valor. He had already distinguished himself in battle—perhaps when Midian was overrunning the land. Jehovah bade Gideon, "Go in this thy might, and save Israel from the hand of Midian: have not I sent thee?"

**COMMENTS ON THE LESSON****Gideon and His Fighting Men (Verses 4-6)**

It is impossible to get the lesson of Gideon if we confine our study to the printed text of the lesson. The lesson really includes chapters 6, 7, and 8; the student should read carefully these chapters. When the angel said to Gideon, "Jehovah is with thee, thou mighty man of valor," Gideon inquired, "Why then is all this befallen us?" Then after some preliminaries Gideon gathered an army of thirty-two thousand. The law required certain preliminaries before going into battle. (Deut. 20:1-9.) The priest was to speak words of encouragement to the army. Then the officers were to announce to the army that anyone might return home who had built a new house and had not dedicated it, or who had planted a vineyard and had not eaten of its fruit, or who had betrothed a wife and had not married her. Especially were the fearful and the fainthearted to return home, lest they discourage the others. In Gideon's army there were twenty-two thousand who were afraid to face the army of Midian. This left Gideon ten thousand. "And Jehovah said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many." He wanted the army so reduced in numbers that they could not say, "Mine own hand hath saved me." So Jehovah gave orders and directions for another sifting at a certain water. The fifth verse is somewhat obscure as to how the test for the fighting men was to be carried out, for men cannot lap water with the tongue as a dog laps. Verse 6 clears up the matter. The ones that lapped up water with their hands as a dog lapped water with his tongue were to be selected. These showed that they were alert and watchful. When there were enemies about, they were in position to see that no one slipped up on them. They had trained themselves to this sort of watchfulness. The vast majority of the ten thousand dropped down on their hands and knees with their faces to the water to drink. They were not watchful. None of the army knew that he was being put to a prearranged test, and so each drank as he had been in the habit of doing. Only three hundred out of thirty-two thousand qualified for the task before them. Twenty-two thousand preferred to be oppressed by the Midianites rather than to fight them, so low had they sunk in manliness! Nine thousand seven hundred were not sufficiently watchful to be dependable.

**Jehovah to Save Israel by the Three Hundred (Verse 7)**

Power and strength belong to Jehovah, and not to the majority of people. "By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you," said Jehovah. But even so, the three hundred had to follow Jehovah's plans, or they would fail. It is a mistaken and hurtful notion that, because Jehovah saves, people therefore have nothing to do, or that, because a man tries to do what God says, he is trying to save himself independent of God. God saves through agencies and by means. To do exactly what God says to reach a certain end is to show the very highest degree of trust in God. For a man to turn from God's way to follow his own way is to trust himself instead of God. A failure to so trust God as to follow his ways had gotten Israel into this trouble. Through the prophet God said to them, "But ye have not hearkened unto my voice." Now if they



would reverse their conduct and do as Jehovah directed, he would save them and deliver the Midianites into their hands.

### **A Prophetic Dream (Verse 15)**

Read verses 8 to 14. The Midianites and associates had moved in on Israel with their families and all their stock. Not all were armed, but the armed men would encamp around the others for protection. At the command of Jehovah Gideon went with his servant "unto the outermost part of the armed men that were in the camp." It was night, and the multitude was asleep. Gideon approached near enough to a tent to hear one man tell a dream to another, and heard the other interpret the dream. In the dream a barley loaf had come tumbling into camp, struck a tent, and turned it upside down. The other said, "This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: into his hand God hath delivered Midian, and all the host." Both the dream and the interpretation were of God; yet these men were enemies of God's people. But there are other instances in which heathen men, men who did not believe in the one God, dreamed prophetic dreams. While Joseph was in prison in Egypt two of his fellow prisoners dreamed prophetic dreams, which Joseph interpreted for them. (Gen. 40.) And then Pharaoh dreamed of seven fat kine which were eaten up by seven lean ones, and also of seven good ears on one stalk which were swallowed up by seven thin ears. These dreams troubled Pharaoh; but the magicians and wise men of Egypt could not interpret them. Then Joseph was brought from prison; and he gave the correct interpretation, and declared to Pharaoh, "What God is about to do he hath showed unto Pharaoh." (Gen. 41:1-32.) And then there is Nebuchadnezzar's dream in which he saw a great image. The dream worried King Nebuchadnezzar; but his specialists could not tell him the dream, and thereby showed that they could not interpret it. When Daniel was called he gave the correct interpretation of the dream, and told Nebuchadnezzar that God had made known to him what would be in the latter days. (Dan. 2:1-45.) As the interpretation of all these dreams was from God, so were the dreams. It is not for us to know the mysteries of the spiritual influences that caused these heathen men to dream prophetic dreams. In such matters God's ways are past tracing out.

### **Gideon Organizes and Instructs His Three Hundred Men (Verses 16-18)**

The three hundred men were divided into three companies, each man having a trumpet, and a pitcher with torches within the pitchers. No other army was ever so equipped—each man with a trumpet in one hand and a pitcher in the other! But Midian did not know this. No such equipment for an army could have originated in the mind of a man; Gideon was acting under the direction of Jehovah. When the companies were stationed about the camp of Midian, nothing was to be done until Gideon gave the signal, and then each was to do as he did. "When I blow the trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, For Jehovah and for Gideon." These companies would not be stationed in compact groups, but would be so strung out as to make it appear to Midian that the whole territory about their camp was

full of enemies. They would naturally think that there was a company of men to each trumpet, and that a signal to charge had been sounded. Being so suddenly roused out of deep sleep in the dead hours of the night by such an uproar, and seeing the lights all about them, they would be thrown into the wildest confusion. They would think that a great army was closing in on them from every side.

### **The Midianites Routed and Destroyed (Verses 19-21)**

Gideon and his three hundred men had to move with the greatest caution, lest the watchers discover them; the Midianites were kept in total ignorance of what was going on. They knew, of course, that Gideon had an army not far away. When the three hundred men under Gideon had time to arrange themselves in their proper places, then suddenly on all sides of the camp of Midian trumpets were sounded, as if each trumpet was giving a signal for a charge. Then pitchers were broken, and suddenly torches flared up in all directions, and the suddenly awakened Midianites heard the shout, "The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon." Midian had no time to think; panic seized them; their officers had no chance to arrange their soldiers for battle, had they desired to do so. A vast throng of people in a panic do not think; they do not stop to reason, or to plan anything. For the time being they are crazy with fright. As they rushed about in the darkness of the night, unable to distinguish friend from foe, each man that was met was feared to be an enemy; and so the Midianites made a great slaughter among themselves. "Jehovah set every man's sword against his fellow, and against all the host." Gideon had nothing to do but to stand in their places, and shout the war cry. (The student should not stop with the last verse of the printed text of the lesson.) Every one of Midian that escaped the sword of his fellow man made an attempt to flee from the land of the children of Israel; they were completely disorganized. Men from Naphtali, Asher, and Manasseh pursued the retreating Midianites. Ephraim sought to cut them off from crossing the Jordan, but did not stop all of them. They captured two princes, Oreb and Zeeb. The student should not stop until he has read to the end of this interesting narrative.

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

No greater mistake can be made than to go on the supposition that God will not punish sin. God is just, and justice demands the punishment of crime. The thing that brought trouble to the children of Israel was their sins, their departures from Jehovah. They forgot Jehovah times without number.

There can be no real improvement in the conduct of people where there is no feeling of personal responsibility to God. In late years crime among young people has increased to an alarming extent. Who is to be blamed? The parents, the schools, colleges, and universities—all are at fault. What is regarded as education today is worthless as a crime preventive; in fact, some of it leads to crime as an inevitable result. When a nation's educational institutions eliminate God from their program of education they are sowing the seeds of national destruction. As it happened to Israel, so will it happen to other nations.

Destruction of faith always brought ruin to Israel, and a revival of faith brought success, happiness, and prosperity. Faith is both a

shield and a mighty driving power; it shields us from any temptation to depart from God, and propels us along in his service. Gideon's faith made him a great leader.

A man may do a great work, and then spoil the good he has done. After Gideon made such a complete destruction of the Midianites, that they gave Israel no more trouble, he spoiled himself and the people he had liberated by making a great ephod of gold, which they all worshiped. Even the strong are frail.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

A study of the Midianites.

Neutrality, with Succoth and Penuel as examples.

How and why were Gideon's neighbors so stirred up against him?

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.

Why were the children of Israel conquered by Midian?

Who were the Midianites?

How did they treat the people of Israel?

What did a prophet tell Israel?

Tell about Gideon and his selection to lead Israel.

#### Verses 4-6

How many men did Gideon collect for his army?

What test did he put to them?

How many went home?

How many remained?

What did Jehovah then say to Gideon?

How were others weeded out?

How many remained?

#### Verse 7

How would Jehovah save Israel?

What is it to trust in God?

#### Verse 15

Tell about Gideon and his servant and what they heard.

Give other instances in which disbelievers dreamed prophetic dreams.

#### Verses 16-18

How did Gideon divide and equip his three hundred men?

What order did he give?

#### Verses 19-21

How did Gideon and his men cause great confusion in the camp of Midian?

Why would they be so panic-stricken?

What happened among the Midianites?

Give some account of occurrences after the complete rout of Midian.

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VI—August 6, 1944

### SAMUEL IN ISRAEL'S HISTORY

1 Sam. 1:19-28

19 And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before Jehovah, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and Jehovah remembered her;

20 And it came to pass, when the time was come about, that Hannah conceived, and bare a son; and she called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of Jehovah.

21 And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto Jehovah the yearly sacrifice, and his vow.

22 But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned; and then I will bring him, that he may appear before Jehovah, and there abide for ever.

23 And Elkanah her husband said unto her Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only Jehovah establish his word. So the woman tarried and gave her son suck, until she weaned him.

24 And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one Ephah of meal, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of Jehovah in Shiloh: and the child was young.

25 And they slew the bullock, and brought the child to Eli.

26 And she said, Oil, my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto Jehovah.

27 For this child I prayed; and Jehovah hath given me my petition which I asked of him:

28 Therefore also I have granted him to Jehovah; as long as he liveth he is granted to Jehovah. And he worshipped Jehovah there.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand." (1 Sam. 12:4.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Psalm 1:1-6.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

July 31. M	Parents of Samuel (1 Sam. 1:1-8)
August 1. T	Samuel Ministering (1 Sam. 2:18-22)
August 2. W	Samuel and Ebenezer (1 Sam. 7:12-17)
August 3. T	Samuel Anointed Saul (1 Sam. 10:1-8)
August 4. F	Samuel Speaking to the People (1 Sam. 10:17-24)
August 5. S	The Uprightness of Samuel (1 Sam. 12:1-5)
August 6. S	The Death of Samuel (1 Sam. 25:1; 28:3, 4)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Chronologists differ, their dates ranging from 1202 B.C. to 1146 B.C.

*Places.*—Shiloh and Ramah.

*Persons.*—Jehovah, Elkanah, Hannah, Eli, and the child Samuel.

*Lesson Links.*—In some cases it is difficult, if not impossible, to figure out the chronological order of the judges. There seems to have been overlapping in some cases, one judge acting in the eastern part of the land while another operated in the western part; but we will not concern ourselves about that. Let the chronologists attend to that.

"Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, of the hill-country of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite: and he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children." (1 Sam. 1:1, 2.) Elkanah was religious, and showed his devotion to Jehovah by attending the feasts Jehovah had designated. There were three annual feasts which all the men of Israel were required to observe. The women were not required to attend these feasts, but had the privilege of doing so when they so desired. (Lev. 23; Deut. 16:1-17.) These feasts had to be held at a certain place. "But unto the place which Jehovah your God shall choose out of all your tribes, to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come; and thither ye shall bring your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and the heave-offering of your hand, and your vows, and your free-will-offerings, and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock: and there ye shall eat before Jehovah your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee." (Deut. 12:5-7.) At the time of our lesson Shiloh was the place where Jehovah had put his name. Here was located the tabernacle, and here the pious men of Israel came to observe the required feasts, and to make their various sacrifices and offerings. On the occasion of our lesson Elkanah came to Shiloh, bringing with him his two wives and Peninnah's children. It was then

considered a calamity and a shame for a wife to bear no children. Peninnah, knowing that Elkanah loved Hannah most, taunted Hannah until life was miserable for Hannah. When they sat down to eat of their sacrifices, Hannah was so heartsore that she could not eat. "So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest was sitting upon his seat by the doorpost of the temple of Jehovah. And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto Jehovah, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O Jehovah of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thy handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thy handmaid, but wilt give unto thy handmaid a man-child, then will I give him unto Jehovah all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head." Hannah did not make one simple request, and then go her way; "she continued praying before Jehovah." She continued pouring out her soul in earnest pleading with Jehovah. Eli the priest, sitting on his seat by the doorpost of the tabernacle, was watching her. "Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I poured out my soul before Jehovah. Count not thy handmaid for a wicked woman; for out of the abundance of my complaint and my provocation have I spoken hitherto. Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace; and the God of Israel grant thy petition that thou hast asked of him. And she said, Let thy handmaid find favor in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat; and her countenance was no more sad." She felt sure that Jehovah would answer her prayer.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### **Hannah's Prayer Answered (Verses 19, 20)**

Shiloh, the place of worship at the time of our lesson, was in the territory of Ephraim, "on the north of Beth-el, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Beth-el to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah." (Judges 21:19.) The location of the Ramah where Elkanah lived is not definitely known. The name Ramah is thought by some to be a short name for Ramathaim-zophim; that place is referred to as being in the hill country of Ephraim. (Verse 1.) When the days of the feast were over Elkanah and his family "rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before Jehovah, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah." In the due course of time Hannah "bare a son; and she called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of Jehovah." The name Samuel, we are told, means "asked of God," or "heard of God." Samuel was granted to Hannah because she earnestly asked for him. And as might be expected, Jehovah gave him a strong body and a sound mind, otherwise he could not have rendered so great service to God and his people. He had the blessing of early training by parents who were pious and devoted to God and his law. And besides the natural obligation of parents to children, Hannah had made a vow concerning the son for which she prayed, to give him to Jehovah all the days of his life. Hence in addition to her natural vows as a mother, her vow would make her feel that she should do all she could to train

young Samuel in such a way that Jehovah, to whom she had pledged the son, could use him. Making vows seems to have been rather common among the Hebrews, so much so that Jehovah gave laws concerning vows. "When thou shalt vow a vow unto Jehovah thy God, thou shalt not be slack to pay it: for Jehovah thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee .... That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt observe and do; according as thou hast vowed unto Jehovah thy God, a freewill-offering, which thou hast promised with thy mouth." (Deut. 23:21-23.) Fuller regulations concerning vows are given in the thirtieth chapter of Numbers; the student should read that chapter. Hannah had vowed to give the son for which she prayed to Jehovah all the days of his life; she would have to fulfill that vow. She also made a vow for the son. He was never to have a razor on his head. This was one of the requirements of the Nazirite vow. (Num. 6:1-12.) Hence it seems that the son for which she prayed was to be a Nazirite all the days of his life. In a special sense he was to belong to Jehovah. In his life he did not disappoint her, but was a source of joy and comfort to her so long as she lived.

### **Hannah Remained Home Until Samuel Was Weaned (Verses 21-23)**

The three annual feasts of the Hebrews were appointed by law, and there were certain sacrifices and offerings to be made at the feasts. The performing of these requirements was of prime importance, but the social opportunities would also be an attractive feature. At these feasts the attendants would meet with their fellow Hebrews of the various tribes. Friendships would be established; and to mix and mingle with these friends would be an added attraction. As the women were not required to attend the feasts, it is probable that the social features contributed greatly to their attendance. It seems that Elkanah's family usually attended these feasts with him. After Samuel was born, and while he was yet but a tiny baby, "the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto Jehovah the yearly sacrifice, and his vow." What this vow was we are not told; but as Hannah had made a vow concerning the son for which she prayed, it is likely that Elkanah's vow concerned the child. But Hannah would not take the infant Samuel to Shiloh where such a great multitude from all parts of the country would be gathered. The infant would be safer at home. Parents are not always so thoughtful of the welfare of their children. Hannah would give up any pleasure for the sake of the son for whom she had so earnestly prayed; she would remain at home until the child was weaned. There has been a lot of useless conjecture and speculation as to the age at which children were then weaned, as if there ever was a fixed period for weaning children! Even if the child, Samuel, was weaned within any reasonable length of time, it seems that he would be too young to be taken from his parents and placed in the care of Eli the priest; and a child so young could be of no real service to Eli the priest, but would still be a care. Perhaps Hannah meant that she would nourish the child and care for him until he was of sufficient age to be of some service. Concerning her decision to remain at home to care for the child, Elkanah said to her, "Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have

weaned him; only Jehovah establish his word." No account had been given concerning any word Jehovah had spoken concerning the child Samuel, but some promise must have been made concerning him, which both Hannah and Elkanah had cherished. Josephus makes this statement: "But Elkanah had other sons by Hannah, and three daughters."

### **Samuel Taken to Eli at Shiloh (Verses 24-28)**

At the proper time for Samuel to be separated from his parents, Hannah took him with her to Shiloh. She was fulfilling her vow. She also took offerings with her, "three bullocks, and one ephah of meal, and a bottle of wine." The house of Jehovah was the tabernacle. The added statement, "And the child was young," seems to indicate that he had not just been weaned from his mother's milk. Had he just been weaned from his mother's breast, that statement would not have been necessary. Hannah had not seen Eli since the time she prayed for a son; now she brings that son to him. It is not likely that any of us can even imagine the joy that then filled that good woman's heart. Parenthood is a glorious thing; it was especially so to this mother who had so earnestly desired a son, and had so fervently prayed for one. Motherhood had been denied her so long. Now, full of gratitude and thanksgiving, she said to Eli, "Oil, my lord, as thy soul liveth"—as sure as you are alive this day—"I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto Jehovah." Had she been of a spiteful nature, she could have said, "And you accused me, sad and praying as I was, of being filled with wine"; but Hannah was a pious woman and respected the office of high priest, for he was God's high priest. No unbecoming words would be spoken by her to God's anointed high priest. But she would remind him of her prayer in his presence. "For this child I prayed; and Jehovah hath given me my petition which I asked of him." There was no doubt in her heart; she was confident that Samuel was an answer to her prayer. As Jehovah had given him to her in answer to her prayer, she would now give him to Jehovah—"therefore also I have granted him to Jehovah." But let us not be unmindful of the sacrifice Hannah was here making; she would henceforth be separated from the joy of her heart, being permitted to see him only occasionally. Home would seem to be so empty without little Samuel; but she could rejoice in the fact that she had given such a son to Jehovah, and in the knowledge that Samuel was where he would be in the very presence of Jehovah. "As long as he liveth he is granted to Jehovah." In this connection the student should not fail to read Hannah's prayer of praise and thanksgiving recorded in chapter 2:1-10. Was this prayer uttered immediately after Samuel was granted to Jehovah at the tabernacle, or later? Statements in the prayer indicate that it was made at a later date. Notice particularly verse 5: "They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry have ceased to hunger: yea, the barren hath borne seven; and she that hath many children languisheth."

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

There is something wrong with married people who do not want children; and something is lacking in a home where there are no children, or where there have been none. It is an unnatural home.

Normal people need the development of character that comes through the experience of parenthood. Parenthood rightly appreciated brings a richness and fullness of character that can come in no other way.

If Hannah had not so earnestly prayed for a son, there would have been no Samuel to bless Israel by his wise counsel, his prophecy, and his so fairly and wisely judging of Israel; nor would Hannah's name have graced the pages of history. When we think of the greatness of Samuel and the service he rendered his people, let us not forget the honorable place Hannah filled in Jehovah's scheme of things. The world needs such women as Hannah.

It is not well to be hasty in our judgments. If we form our judgments, we, like Eli, condemn when we should praise. If Eli had spoken to some people as he did to Hannah, they would have wanted never to see him again. Hasty and unjust judgments are very discouraging to some people. Besides, if we form our judgments too hastily, we injure our own character. We, like Eli, may become false accusers, if we are not careful in what we say. Making false accusations is one of the leading practices of Satan. Our speech should not be Satanic in its nature. Lest you injure yourself and the person of whom you speak, or to whom you speak, be sure you know the facts before you express an opinion. And we should be just as careful not to condone and excuse sin in ourselves and others.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The law of vows.  
Some great women of the Bible.  
The habit of forming hasty judgments.  
Examples of answered prayers.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
What is said in verse 1 of Elkanah?  
Tell about the annual feasts required by the law of Moses.  
Where did the Hebrews go to worship?  
Tell about Hannah and her prayer.  
What did Eli say, and what reply did Hannah make?

#### Verses 19, 20

Locate Shiloh.  
What was the name of Hannah's son, and why did she so name him?  
What vow did Hannah make, and what was the

law concerning vows?

#### Verses 21-23

Besides the worship, what other attractive features belonged to the feasts?  
Why did Hannah not attend the feasts for a time?  
Discuss the advisability of taking infants to great gatherings of people.  
What did Elkanah say to Hannah about her remaining at home?

#### Verses 24-28

How did Hannah fulfill her vow?  
What did Hannah say to Eli the priest?  
Discuss the various items of her statement.  
What blessing resulted from Hannah's prayer?  
Discuss the reflections.



## Lesson VII—August 13, 1944

**THE PRIEST IN THE LIFE OF ISRAEL**

1 Sam. 2:27-30, 35; 4:12-18

27 And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith Jehovah, Did I reveal myself unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in bondage to Pharaoh's house?

28 And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up unto mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings of the children of Israel made by fire?

29 Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation, and honorest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?

30 Therefore Jehovah, the God of Israel, saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now Jehovah saith, Be it far from me; for them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

35 And I will raise me up a faithful<sup>1</sup> priest, that shall do according to that which is in my heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.

12 And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day, with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head.

13 And when he came, lo, Eli was sitting upon his seat by the wayside watching; for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out.

14 And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What meaneth the noise of this tumult? And the man hasted, and came and told Eli.

15 Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were set, so that he could not see.

16 And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to-day out of the army. And he said, How went the matter, my son?

17 And he that brought the tidings answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.

18 And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that Eli fell from off his seat backward by the side of the gate; and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"For every high priest, being taken from among men, is appointed for men in things pertaining to God." (Heb. 5:1.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Heb. 5:1-9.

*DAILY BIBLE HEADINGS.*—

August 7. M  
August 8. T  
August 9. W  
August 10. T  
August 11. F  
August 12. S  
August 13. S

The Priesthood Instituted (Ex. 28:1-5)  
A Minister Before God (Ex. 28:30-39)  
A Servant of the Sanctuary (Num. 18:1-7)  
The High Priest Melchizedek (Gen. 14:17-24)  
An Unfaithful Priest Rebuked (1 Sam. 2:27-35)  
An Unfaithful Priest Punished (1 Sam. 4:12-18)  
Our Great High Priest (Heb. 5:1-10)

**LESSON SETTINGS**

*Time.*—For the first section of our lesson, about 1152 B.C.; for the second part, about ten years later.

*Place.*—Shiloh.

*Persons.*—Jehovah, Samuel, Eli, a prophet, the Philistines, Hophni, and Phinehas.

*Lesson Links.*—At the time of our lesson Eli was both high priest and judge. A judge appears to have been a combination ruler and judge. Combining the office of high priest and judge, as was the case with Eli, gave such a person extensive powers; such a one had jurisdiction over the tabernacle and the worship, and also over the civil affairs of the people. Eli's two sons were priests; but as Eli was growing old at this time, it seems that he turned the affairs of the tabernacle over to his two sons. "Now the sons of Eli were base men; they knew not Jehovah"—they did not recognize Jehovah as God. A priest was meant to represent man to God. As high priest Eli should have seen to it that everything about the tabernacle was carried on according to law; he should have seen to it that all the sacrifices were offered and disposed of according to the law. Of certain sacrifices the breast and the right thigh belonged to the priests, and the rest was eaten by the person who brought the sacrifice, his people joining in the eating; the fat was to be burned on the altar. (Lev. 7:22-34.) But these corrupt sons of Eli cared nothing for the law of God. They took the fat for themselves, thus putting themselves above Jehovah; and they took whatever other parts of sacrifices that suited them, even if they had to use force to do so. They also indulged in immoral practices "with the women that did service at the door of the tent of meeting." Such practices with those who were supposed to be carrying on the worship of Jehovah was revolting to an extreme degree. And Eli knew what his sons were doing, but made no determined effort to correct their evil ways. "And the sin of the young men was very great before Jehovah; for the men despised the offering of Jehovah." Eli was very old at this time, which may account for his failure to put forth a determined effort to see that his sons did right, or to drive them out of their office if they failed to do right. But the most he did was to deliver to them a mild protest and a sort of halfhearted rebuke for their corrupt practices.

In the meantime Samuel ministered before Jehovah, though he was still very young. Being so young it is not likely that he had yet learned what portion of the sacrifices belonged to the priests. Even had he been of sufficient age, he could not assume the place and authority of high priest. Samuel's mother made him a robe each year, and brought it to him. And after Samuel Hannah became the mother of three sons and two daughters. "And the child Samuel grew on, and increased, in favor both with Jehovah, and also with men."

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### A Prophet Visits Eli (Verses 27-29)

In the Bible the term "man of God" refers to a prophet or a public teacher of God's word. The man of God here mentioned was a prophet of God. This prophet makes a number of statements to Eli in the form of questions. Aaron was the father of the family of priests. Jehovah had revealed himself to Aaron while he was yet in Egypt. Whether he had appeared to Aaron before he said to him, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses," we know not. (Ex. 4:27.) Aaron was chosen to be the first high priest for the whole people of Israel. Before that time the head of a family or clan was the priest of that family or clan. Now the Hebrews were to have a national religion, and one high priest over all. His sons were to be priests.

When the high priest died his oldest son would take his place. Certain portions of many of the offerings belonged to the priests; herein was their living. (See Lev. 6 and 7, and other passages.) "They that wait upon the altar have their portion with the altar." (1 Cor. 9:13.) But Eli's sons were not at all satisfied with Jehovah's arrangements. They kicked against Jehovah's plans for them, and proceeded to arrange things to suit themselves. Many religionists even today disregard God's order, and proceed to arrange things to suit their own tastes and conveniences. In sustaining his corrupt sons and their greed—in their utter disregard of Jehovah and his law—Eli was honoring them above Jehovah. And today, when we uphold and sustain a man who is corrupt, or who is disregarding God's law in his preaching and worship, we are putting him above God. And some otherwise good people do that very thing. It seems that Eli was profiting by the thieving of his two sons. The phrase, "to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people," makes Eli a party to the rascality of his sons.

### **Jehovah's Unchanging Principle (Verse 30)**

Jehovah does not change. When he makes a promise to a righteous man, that promise is meant for a righteous man. If the righteous man turns from his righteousness, he thereby passes out from under that promise. To fulfill the promise to a man who had plunged into sin would be to encourage sin; Jehovah could not do that, and remain true to himself, true to his own principles of justice and holiness. Eli should have known—perhaps did know in a general way—that Jehovah would severely punish, and bring to nought, all who corrupted themselves and profaned Jehovah's holy things as Hophni and Phinehas, Eli's sons, were doing. Eli was sharing their guilt by sustaining them in the office which they were so shamelessly degrading. He was honoring them above Jehovah. Would Jehovah continue to recognize the house of Eli as his priests? "Be it far from me; for them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." Here is stated an unchanging principle of God's dealings with men; it is as unchanging as he is. In later years Jehovah said through Malachi, "And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith Jehovah of hosts, then will I send the curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart ... For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of Jehovah of hosts. But ye are turned aside out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble in the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith Jehovah of hosts. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have had respect of persons in the law." (Mal. 2:1-9.) Through the prophet who came to Eli, Jehovah informed Eli that he would cut off his house from being priests.

### **The Priesthood Would Pass to Another (Verse 35)**

The student should read verses 31-34. Another family of the seed of Aaron would become priests. "And this shall be the sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas:

in one day they shall die both of them." (Verse 34.) "And I will raise me up a faithful priest"; "and I will build him a sure house." That means that the new priest would be the head of a new line of chief priests. When Aaron died Eleazar, his oldest living son, became high priest, and that order was followed, unless Eli was an exception. There are grounds for thinking that he was of the family of Ithamar. Why this change had been made, we are not informed. If that position is correct, which it seems to be, then the high priesthood would in time go back to the family of Eleazar. After Jehovah through the prophet delivered the rebuke to Eli there is no evidence that Eli tried to profit by it; things went on as they had been.

### **Intervening Verses (1 Sam. 3:1 to 4:11)**

Do not miss these verses. "And the word of Jehovah was precious in those days; there was no frequent vision." It was precious in the sense that it was rare. The reason: "there was no frequent vision," no frequent revelations. But Jehovah appeared to Samuel, and made this statement: "Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from the beginning even unto the end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated with sacrifice nor offering for ever." About this time Israel determined to throw off the yoke of the Philistines, but they were severely defeated in the first battle. They had a superstitious notion that the ark of the covenant in their midst would enable them to win the next battle; and so they took the ark with them as a charm. Foolish men! Israel suffered a terrible defeat thirty thousand of them were slain.

### **A Runner Carries the News to Shiloh (Verses 12-14)**

With our present methods of transmitting news in a moment, it is hard for us to realize that anciently news dispatches were sent by runners. A trained runner then served a useful purpose. It is not likely that any man then ever dreamed that any better method of transmitting news would ever be invented. When the battle with the Philistines went so disastrously against Israel a runner of the tribe of Benjamin carried the news to Shiloh. Of course every one anxiously awaited news of the battle, and were bound to be fearful of the outcome of the battle. The runner reached Shiloh the same day, with his clothes rent and earth upon his head. We are told that this method of expressing distress and sorrow and despair was not peculiar to the Hebrews, but was common among the Greeks and Romans. All who saw the runner knew that he was the bearer of bad news. Doubtless the ark had been carried into that battle against the feelings and advice of Eli. He was sitting in his seat, anxiously awaiting news of the battle; "for his heart trembled for the ark of God." Why so concerned about the ark? He had put his sons above Jehovah; he had allowed them to corrupt the worship, and profane the tabernacle with their immoral practices; yet his heart trembled for the ark of God, rather than for his sons. It seems that the runner reached the city before he came to the tabernacle. If he did not

take time to tell any of the people the news, they knew from his looks that the army of Israel had been crushed; there was a great commotion in the city. It aroused Eli, and he inquired what it meant. At this juncture the messenger arrived, and told Eli the sad and disturbing news.

### **The Fatal Effects of the News on Eli (Verses 15-18)**

At this time Eli was an old man, ninety-eight years old; "and his eyes were set, so that he could not see." Because Eli could not see, the messenger identified himself as one who had fled from the army. Eli then inquired, "How went the matter, my son?" Then the messenger did as fine a job of reporting as anyone is likely ever to read. Notice the brevity, and yet the completeness, of the report; not one essential detail was left out. In one short sentence the whole story is told. There is another striking thing about the report —its rapid ascent to a climax. "Israel is fled before the Philistines." For an army to be defeated is always bad for the army and the people for whom they fight; but to be put to flight by such cruel enemies as were the Philistines is a calamity to any people. The Philistines would now make the burden of Israel heavier than ever. "And there hath been also a great slaughter among the people." The nation had lost many of its effective men, thirty thousand in this battle and four thousand in the other; and there were left many widows and fatherless children, as is always the case in war. Many parents were also bereft of sons. "And thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead." These sons were bad; but they were Eli's sons, and he loved them. Perhaps Eli depended on them for support. "And the ark of God is taken." This was more than the aged priest could stand the symbol of God's presence was now gone from Israel, and with it had gone all of Eli's hopes. At the news about the ark, "Eli fell from off his seat backward by the side of the gate; and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy."

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

Eli let things go on in a most shameful way in the way his sons did; it does not seem that he had a proper reverence for Jehovah, nor for Jehovah's house, nor for Jehovah's worship. As a father, it was his duty to correct his sons; as high priest, it was his duty to see that things went on right at the tabernacle; as judge, it was his duty to try earnestly to lead the nation in righteousness. He had done neither. And now he had paid the penalty.

Eli was not actively bad; he was neglectful. He did not rebel at what Jehovah told him through Samuel, but said, "It is Jehovah: let him do what seemeth him good." He was good in a passive way. He protested against the corrupt practices of his sons, and let it go that. There are too many people of that sort today; but when you begin to try to figure out what they are good for, you wind up by saying, "Well, they are just good." Yes, good, but good for nothing. Goodness should be positive and aggressive.

Eli's failures did not excuse the crimes of his sons; they had to answer for their crimes. Too many people try to justify themselves by blaming someone else. Such tactics have no influence with Jehovah; "for each man shall bear his own burden." "If thou art wise, thou art wise for thyself; and if thou scoffest, thou alone shalt bear it." (Prov. 9:12.)

**TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION**

The sin of corrupting the worship.  
 Why losing the ark seemed so tragic.  
 God's promises conditional.

**QUESTIONS**

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

Discuss Mal. 2:1-9.

**Lesson Settings**

Give time, place, and persons.  
 What were the offices and duties of Eli?  
 Tell about the evil behavior of his two sons.

**Verse 35**

Give outline of the contents of verses 31-34.  
 Discuss verse 35.

**Verses 27-29**

To what does the term "man of God" apply?  
 Who was the first high priest in Israel, and who the next?  
 Discuss verses 27-29.

**1 Sam. 3:1 to 4:11**

Give an outline of the contents of these intervening verses.

**Verses 12-14**

Tell about the then method of transmitting news.  
 Tell about the runner mentioned in these verses.

**Verse 30**

Why does a person sometimes not receive the thing promised him?  
 Discuss the principle stated in verse 30.

**Verses 15-18**

Discuss the runner's report and its effect.  
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VIII—August 20, 1944

**THE PROPHET IN THE LIFE OF ISRAEL**

1 Sam. 3:19-21; 7:3-12

19 And Samuel grew, and Jehovah was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

20 And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of Jehovah.

21 And Jehovah appeared again in Shiloh; for Jehovah revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of Jehovah.

3 And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto Jehovah with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and direct your hearts unto Jehovah, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.

4 Then the children of Israel did put away the Baalim and the Ashtaroth, and served Jehovah only.

5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray for you unto Jehovah.

6 And they gathered together to Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against Jehovah. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah.

7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines.

8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto Jehovah our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.

9 And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt-offering unto Jehovah; and Samuel cried unto Jehovah for Israel; and Jehovah answered him.

10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel; but Jehovah thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten down before Israel.

11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Beth-car.

12 Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully." (Jer. 23:28.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Ezek. 3:16-21.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

August 14. M	The Prophet. God's Spokesman (Deut. 18:15-22)
August 15. T	The Prophet Divinely Appointed (Ex. 3:1-12)
August 16. W	A Growing Prophet (1 Sam. 3:15-21)
August 17. T	A Praying Prophet (1 Sam. 7:3-12)
August 18. F	Jeremiah's Prophetic Call (Jer. 1:4-10)
August 19. S	A Reforming Prophet (1 Kings 17' 1-7)
August 20. S	Prophets Mighty Through Faith (Heb. 11:32-40)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—For the first part of the lesson, 1152 B.C. according to Hales; for the second part, probably about 1120 B.C.

*Places.*—Shiloh, Mizpah, or Mizpeh, and westward toward the land of the Philistines. There were two places named Mizpah, or Mizpeh; one in the territory of Benjamin not far to the north of Jerusalem. This appears to have been the Mizpah of our lesson. The word Mizpah meant "a watchtower."

*Persons.*—Samuel, the people of Israel, and the Philistines. The Philistines were a warlike people inhabiting a strip of country along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

*Lesson Links.*—In the first part of our lesson Samuel comes before us as a prophet. A prophet is one who speaks for another. That is the meaning of the word. The idea of foretelling future events is not in the word. The real significance is seen in the relation that Jehovah established between Moses and Aaron. In Ex. 7:1 we have this: "And Jehovah said unto Moses, See, I have made thee as God to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet." Jehovah had said to Moses concerning Aaron, "And thou shalt speak unto him, and put the words in his mouth .... 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." (Ex. 4:15, 16.) Moses was to tell Aaron what to say, and Aaron was to do the talking to both the people of Israel and Pharaoh. Aaron would therefore speak for Moses; he would be Moses' prophet. One who delivers a message from God is God's prophet; God speaks by the mouth of his prophets. All of God's prophets were inspired; they spoke for God; they spoke the words God gave them. They represented God to the people; they were the voice of God. It is true that they sometimes foretold events; but even so, they were merely God's spokesmen. They were prophets, not because they foretold events, but because they spoke for God. Foretelling events was not the major part of what the prophets said. It seems that most of their prophesying consisted in teaching, rebuking, and exhorting their generation. Through the prophet God speaks to man.

But there were false prophets—those who professed to represent a false God, and those who falsely claimed to speak for the true God. (Read Jer. 14:14, and chapter 23.)

**COMMENTS ON THE LESSON****Samuel Becomes a Prophet (Verses 19-21)**

"And Samuel grew." Leeser, the Jewish translator, has, "And Samuel grew up." That is, he became a man; he also became a prophet, God's spokesman, God's mouthpiece. The things he foretold came to pass—not one thing failed to occur as he had said it would. As God's spokesman, he taught the people. Dan Was a city in the extreme north part of the territory allotted to the tribes of Israel, and Beersheba was at the extreme southern limit of their allotted territory. Hence the phrase, "from Dan to Beer-sheba," was used to express the whole of their allotted territory. And so all Israel—"from Dan even to Beer-sheba"—knew Samuel was established to be a prophet. For the phrase, "And Jehovah appeared again in Shiloh," Leeser has. "And the Lord continued to appear in Shiloh." Therefore he appeared to Samuel repeatedly in Shiloh, as the need arose. While young Samuel ministered—was of service—about the tabernacle; when he reached manhood he became a prophet.

**Samuel Points the Way to Deliverance (1 Sam. 7:3, 4)**

Some important things occurred between the two sections of our lesson. The utter rout of the armies of Israel and the capture of the ark of the covenant by the Philistines we studied in our last lesson. When the ark was taken Israel thought the glory of Israel was gone—that God's presence was taken from them. But the ark proved anything but a blessing to the Philistines. (Chapter 5.) God's presence is a blessing to those who love and serve him, but death and disaster to his enemies. The Philistines kept the ark seven months, and then sent it back to Israel. (Chapter 6.) But the disasters of Israel brought the nation to its senses. So long as Israel was faithful to Jehovah, no nation could overcome them; but they became weak when they turned away from Jehovah, and were then conquered by their enemies. When they would turn to Jehovah, they were able to drive out their conquerors. They had long been under the dominion of the Philistines; now Samuel shows them the way out of such bondage. "If ye do return unto Jehovah with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and direct your hearts unto Jehovah, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." Herein lay their only hope of deliverance; their troubles began when they turned away from Jehovah to these foreign gods. Any nation that turns away from Jehovah takes the path to destruction. But to turn to Jehovah they would have to put away their foreign gods, and serve Jehovah only; they could not serve both. If they expected Jehovah's blessings, they must give him their undivided service; their deliverance from the oppression of the Philistines depended on their doing that very thing. This they readily agreed to do.

**Samuel Calls a Meeting at Mizpah (Verses 5, 6)**

When Samuel saw that the people were in earnest about turning to Jehovah, he called for them to meet at Mizpah. This would require that messengers be sent to the various parts of the territory of Israel. The time had come for action. If they expected Jehovah to deliver



them from the Philistines, they must do something about it. In-action brings no blessing, nor does it deserve any. It is probable that only men able to go to war came to the meeting. It is probable that their pouring out water was meant to be symbolic of their pouring out their hearts unto Jehovah. "Pour out thy heart like water before the face of the Lord." (Lam. 2:19.) For other similar expressions see 1 Sam. 1:15; Psalm 42:4; 62:8. Israel also fasted that day, and made confession of their sins, saying, "We have sinned against Jehovah." They poured out their heart to Jehovah as they had poured out the water. Their distressed condition had brought them to a frame of mind wherein they were willing to listen to the teaching of Samuel. All genuine reformations come from correct teaching. People must see their sins and their need of repentance before they make any effort to amend their ways. A halfhearted reformation is only a pretense; such a pretended reformation leads one to say, "If I have done wrong .... " But the men of Israel said outright, "We have sinned." Here Samuel held court—"judged the children of Israel in Mizpah"—to adjust any wrongs between the people of Israel. All wrongs had to be righted, else they could not expect Jehovah to give them victory. Samuel knew that such a meeting as he was holding would stir the Philistines into action against them. He must therefore bring the people to a right frame of mind, so that Jehovah would be with them. The prophet Azariah said to Asa and all the men of Judah and Benjamin, "Jehovah is with you, while ye are with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you." (2 Chron. 15:1, 2.) Azariah's statement is always true. Samuel knew that truth well, and he had so taught the people of Israel; and that teaching led to their repentance.

### **The Philistines Move Against Israel (Verses 7, 8)**

In calling this meeting of the men of Israel, Samuel would, of course, have them bring whatever equipment for war they might have; for he knew the Philistines would seek to break up any such meetings by people under their domination. So soon as the Philistines heard of the meeting, "the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel." There were five of these lords; and of course each lord would lead a company of men made up of the men of his city and surrounding territory. They meant to break up this gathering of Israel before it got beyond their control. When the men of Israel discovered that this army of Philistines was coming against them, they were filled with fear. They remembered what the Philistines had previously done to them. They must have feared that Jehovah would not help them; yet they had some faith, for they said to Samuel, "Cease not to cry unto Jehovah our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines." They were asking Samuel to voice their prayers. And always when they had turned from their sins and idols, and trusted in Jehovah, he had heard their prayers and gave them deliverance from their enemies.

### **The Philistines Defeated (Verses 9-11)**

The dreaded Philistines were coming. What Samuel and his men did had to be done quickly. First, Samuel offered a lamb for a sacrifice; perhaps he did this through the agency of a priest, for a man is said to do what he authorizes to be done. It seems that while

the lamb was yet on the altar Samuel prayed to Jehovah; "and Jehovah answered him." While Samuel was yet offering the sacrifice, "the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel." They meant to put down this rebellious move before it got well started. "But Jehovah thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them." It seems that there was a great storm. Josephus must have had sources of information that have been lost, for among other things he says of the happenings of that day, "But things so fell out, that they would have hardly been credited though they had been foretold by anybody; for in the first place, God disturbed the enemies with an earthquake, and moved the ground under them to such a degree, that he caused it to tremble, and made them to shake, insomuch that, by its trembling, he made some unable to keep their feet, and made them fall down, and by opening its chasms, he caused that others should be hurried down into them; after which he caused such a noise of thunder to come among them, and made fiery lightning shine so terribly round about them, that it was ready to burn their faces; and he so suddenly shook their weapons out of their hands, that he made them fly and return home naked." The Philistines suffered a terrible defeat, even worse than they had inflicted on Israel. They fled westward toward their homes, with Israel in hot pursuit. "And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Beth-car." The location of Beth-car is not known, excepting that it was west of Mizpah, on the way to the territory of the Philistines. For quite a long time the Philistines did not bother Israel.

### **"So the Philistines Were Subdued" (Verses 12, 13)**

Verse 13 is not included in our printed text, but it should be studied in our lesson. Where Samuel and the men of Israel stopped pursuing the Philistines, Samuel set up a stone, evidently to mark the boundary line between Israel and the Philistines. He called the stone Ebenezer, that is, "the stone of help." Josephus calls it the "stone of power." Samuel said, "Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us." And Samuel knew that they had been able to drive out the Philistines solely because Jehovah had helped them. Without him they could have done nothing. Before the battle began the men of Israel had asked that Samuel cease not to pray for them—to pray that Jehovah would save them out of the hand of the Philistines. "And Jehovah answered him." Jehovah saved them, but they had to do what they could. Alone they would have been helpless before the Philistines; with Jehovah's help they drove the Philistines back to their own country. It is often argued that if a man has to do anything to save himself, the man is his own savior, and God is left out. The theory is that a man must be entirely passive when God saves him; but the truth is, God does not save the person who remains passive. In matters of salvation from sin inspired men told sinners what to do, and then exhorted them, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." (Acts 2:38-40.) If Israel had remained passive, they would have remained under the domination of the Philistines; and if a sinner remains passive, he will remain under the dominion of the devil! But Israel did not remain passive, and therefore Jehovah gave them victory over the mighty Philistines. "So the Philistines

were subdued, and they came no more within the border of Israel." This must mean that this decisive victory over them kept them from renewing the attack at this time. That war was over. They did war with Israel in the days of King Saul. "And the hand of Jehovah was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel."

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Let us not get a one-sided view of Jehovah; we must accept him as he is revealed in the Bible. To those who do his will, God is love, and all that is implied in that expression; but to the wicked, to those who disobey him, he is a consuming fire, and all that is implied in that expression. His dealings with the Jews prove this.

All reforms are brought about by teaching, and all acceptable service to God grows out of teaching; but there must be a proper frame of mind and heart before there can be any effective teaching. There must be a willingness to learn. What the children of Israel suffered under the oppression of the Philistines put them in the mood to listen to Samuel's teaching. Sorrows and calamities do not convert people; but such experiences may bring them to a frame of mind that causes them to give heed to the word of God, and they are then converted by that word. The gospel is God's power for saving people. (Rom. 1:16.) But even so, it is powerless to save the person who hardens his heart against it. (Matt. 13:15.)

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The need of teaching and the frame of mind that accepts teaching.  
The things that keep people from listening to God's word.  
Turning to God.  
Confessing sins.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Discuss the functions of a prophet.

#### Verses 19-21

How extensively was Samuel recognized as a prophet?  
Where did Samuel begin to prophesy?

#### 1 Sam. 7:3, 4

Give the important occurrences between the two sections of our lesson.  
Give Jehovah's method of dealing with Israel.  
Discuss what Samuel told Israel.

#### Verses 5, 6

What encouraged Samuel to call a meeting?  
What preparation was made to meet the Philistines?

Reformation comes from what?  
On what grounds would Jehovah be with them?  
Does Azariah's statement hold good today?

#### Verses 7, 8

What did the Philistines do about this meeting at Mizpah?  
What did Israel ask Samuel to do?

#### Verses 9-11

How did Jehovah cause consternation among the Philistines?  
Give results of that day's action.

#### Verses 12, 13

Why did Samuel set up a stone, and what does the name he gave it signify?  
Does God save people without their doing anything?  
Discuss this point.  
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IX—August 27, 1944

**ISRAEL'S FIRST KING**  
1 Sam. 9:15-21; 10:25-27; 11:12-15

15 Now Jehovah had revealed unto Samuel a day before Saul came, saying,

16 Tomorrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be prince over my people Israel; and he shall save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me.

17 And when Samuel saw Saul, Jehovah said unto him, Behold, the man of whom I spake to thee, this same shall have authority over my people.

18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is.

19 And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer; go up before me unto the high place, for ye shall eat with me to-day: and in the morning I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thy heart.

20 And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? is it not for thee, and for all thy father's house?

21 And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou to me after this manner?

25 Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before Jehovah. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.

26 And Saul also went to his house to Gibeah; and there went with him the host, whose hearts God had touched.

27 But certain worthless fellows said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no present. But he held his peace.

12 And the people said unto Samuel, Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death.

13 And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day; for to-day Jehovah hath wrought deliverance in Israel.

14 Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there.

15 And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before Jehovah in Gilgal; and there they offered sacrifices of peace-offerings before Jehovah; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king." (1 Pet. 2:17.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Psalm 72:1-8.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

August 21. M

August 22. T

August 23. W

August 24. T

August 25. F

August 26. S

August 27. S

Jehovah's Choice of a King (Deut. 17:14-17)

The King Revealed (1 Sam. 9:15-21)

The King Chosen (1 Sam. 10:17-24)

The King's Men of Valor (1 Sam. 10:25-27)

The King's Coronation (1 Sam. 11:12-15)

Learning Jehovah's Law (Psalm 119:1-8)

The Secret of Strength (1 Cor. 9:22-27)

**LESSON SETTINGS**

*Time.*—According to Hales, Saul was made king in 1110 B.C.; according to Usher, 1095 B.C.

*Places.*—Samuel had gone from Shiloh back to his native city Ramah. (1 Sam. 7:17.) Saul was chosen to be king at Mizpah. The Ammonites were defeated at Jabesh-gilead. Saul's native city

is not certainly known, though it was likely Zelah, for that was the place of the sepulcher of Kish, Saul's father. (2 Sam. 21:14.)

*Persons.*—Jehovah, Samuel, Saul, the people of Israel, and the Ammonites. The Ammonites were descendants of Lot.

*Lesson Links.*—Samuel was both prophet and judge. He also engaged in one battle in which he was general, as we learned in our last lesson. The people bore witness to his honesty and faithfulness as a public servant. (1 Sam. 12:1-5.) But he made a mistake in his old days. "And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel .... And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted justice." (1 Sam. 8:1-3.) Eli's sons corrupted themselves and the worship; Samuel's sons corrupted themselves and perverted justice. Such men are base in their sinfulness, and are a curse to mankind; they are utterly unfit for any public trust. They have no sense of honor, nor pride of character. And they cause other and better people, in protest, to do things that should not be done. These corrupt sons of Samuel gave the people an excuse to say to Samuel, "Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." It displeased Samuel, and he prayed to Jehovah about it; "and Jehovah said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not be king over them. Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit thou shalt protest solemnly unto them; and shalt show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them." Samuel then showed the people how oppressive and burdensome their king would be. "But the people refused to hearken unto the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles." Again Jehovah said to Samuel, "Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king." Jehovah allows people to go the way they are determined to go. He protests against their going their own way, and shows them the consequences of such a course; but if they will not hear him, and are still determined to have their own way, he virtually says to them, Have your own way, but remember that I warned you. How Saul and his servant were led to the house of Samuel is told in chapter 9, verses 1 to 14.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Jehovah Selects the King (Verses 15-17)

At the close of the interview between Samuel and the elders, in which they demanded a king, Samuel said to them, "Go ye every man unto his city." They had no idea who would be king, neither did Samuel. "Now Jehovah had revealed unto Samuel a day before Saul came, saying, To-morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be prince over my people Israel." When Saul drew near Jehovah said to Samuel, "Behold, the man of whom I spake to thee! this same shall have authority over my people." Jehovah therefore had told Samuel who would be king, but some of the people might doubt Samuel's word in the matter; and so Samuel called the people together, and had the matter settled in a way that none could doubt.

Then Samuel said, "See ye him whom Jehovah hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people?" (1 Sam. 10:24.) None of the people knew who was to be their king until that moment. The people chose the king in the sense that they chose to have one. (1 Sam. 12:13.) It is plain that Jehovah, not the people, chose Saul.

### **Saul Informed of His Selection (Verses 18-21)**

Saul was not out as a candidate to be king; he was engaged in the lowly, but necessary, task of seeking his father's asses that had gone astray. A remark made by his servant that accompanied him, led Saul to visit Samuel, to see if the prophet could give them any help in their quest. Saul did not know Samuel, for he said to Samuel, "Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is." Saul became Samuel's guest for the evening and night, with Samuel's promise to tell him in the morning what he desired to know. It so turned out that Samuel told him much more than he expected to hear. Saul was to be the king for which the men of Israel had asked. Saul did not then have any idea that he was to be king. He considered himself, his family, and his tribe too insignificant for such honors. "Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin?" Saul did not feel important at this time. He felt that it would be more appropriate for the king to come from a great family in one of the larger tribes. His modesty contrasts favorably with some of our modern candidates for office. He rated himself so obscure that Samuel's words were both a surprise and a puzzle to him. "Wherefore then speakest thou to me after this manner?" Why select me?

### **"The Manner of the Kingdom" (1 Sam. 10:25-27)**

When the children of Israel determined to have a king, Jehovah said to Samuel, "Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit thou shalt protest solemnly unto them, and shalt show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them." Then Samuel said to the people, "This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: he will take your sons, and appoint them unto him, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and they shall run before his chariots; and he will appoint them unto him for captains of thousands, and captains of fifties; and he will set some to plow his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and the instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be perfumers, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants .... And he will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks: and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king whom ye shall have chosen you; and Jehovah will not answer you in that day." (1 Sam. 8:9-18.) But they would not heed Samuel's warning, but seemed more determined to have a king. When Jehovah had selected the king from all the families and tribes, Samuel presented him to the people; and they saw that he was a magnificent specimen of manhood, such as would inspire confidence in his ability to lead them; and they shouted, "Long live the king." Then Samuel wrote in a book the

manner of the kingdom, "and laid it up before Jehovah." Then Samuel dismissed the assembled people. Saul also returned to his house in Gibeon. Gibeon denotes a hill. Previous to this it is not said that Saul's home was in Gibeon. In chapter 11, verse 4, it is referred to as Gibeon of Saul; this distinguished it from other Gibeons. There were other places bearing the name Gibeon. Not all the men accepted Saul as king. "Certain worthless fellows said, How shall this man save us?" They had reference to saving them from the Philistines, and probably also from the Ammonites. These men brought Saul no present to express their appreciation of him. But Saul wisely held his peace. There are times when silence is better than words. As Saul did not denounce these men, but held his peace, it was easier to win them over than if he had abused them. The marginal reading has, "But he was as though he had been deaf." It usually is a good thing not to give any indication that one has heard remarks that are intended to be personal insults. A man that is worth paying any attention to will not try to make unprovoked, insulting remarks. Such gibes are the mark of a little soul.

### **Saul Displays a Magnanimous Spirit (1 Sam. 11:12, 13)**

The Ammonites under the leadership of Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, laid siege to Jabesh-gilead. This appears to have been an entirely unprovoked attack on a peaceful and weak city; the Ammonites were doubtless out for plunder. Jabesh-gilead was in the trans-Jordan, in Gilead. The besieged Jabeshites said to Nahash, "Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee." But Nahash was a cruel, heartless tyrant, and answered the men of Jabesh in these revolting words: "On this condition will I make it with you, that all your right eyes be put out; and I will lay it for a reproach upon all Israel." Jabesh asked for a seven-day respite, that they might send messengers to all the borders of Israel; then if no help came, they would submit. "Then came the messengers to Gibeon of Saul, and spake these words in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up their voice, and wept. And, behold, Saul came following the oxen out of the field; and Saul said, What aileth the people that they weep? And they told him the words of the men of Jabesh." It will be noted that Saul—King Saul—was engaged in his home affairs, as if he had no intention of taking over the affairs of the government. It is likely that he had been plowing in the field, for a yoke of oxen is immediately mentioned. Perhaps he had meant for Samuel to continue as judge until something developed that would require his active participation in government affairs. Now the occasion demanded action from him, rather than from the aging Samuel. The demands of Nahash on the men of Jabesh-gilead greatly angered him, and he immediately sent out messengers calling the men of Israel to assemble at once. He had made this call impressive by cutting to pieces a yoke of oxen, and sending a piece with each messenger with these words: "Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen." We can see why Saul included Samuel in this demand. Samuel had the full confidence of the people, for they had seen him tried; Saul was as yet practically unknown. The people knew Samuel's integrity and ability, but not Saul's. But the demand had the desired effect. "And the dread of Jehovah fell on the people, and they came out as

## LESSON IX THIRD QUARTER

one man." The messengers of Jabesh returned with this message: "To-morrow, by the time the sun is hot, ye shall have deliverance." The Ammonites were not informed of this; and so the men of Jabesh, as if submissive to Nahash, said to him, "To-morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you." On the morrow Saul and his army came upon the Ammonites, and so routed them that no two of them were left together. Then the people of Israel wanted to put to death those men who had belittled Saul; but Saul showed a magnanimous spirit: "There shall not a man be put to death this day; for to-day Jehovah hath wrought deliverance in Israel." Again it will be noticed that Jehovah gave them deliverance, but not without their doing their part.

### **The Kingdom Renewed at Gilgal (Verses 14, 15)**

Gilgal was the place where the children of Israel passed the first night after they crossed the Jordan. (Josh. 4:19, 20.) Here they kept the first passover in their new land. (Josh. 5:10.) Here Samuel would renew the kingdom. Saul's first anointing had been a very private affair—none but Samuel and Saul knew it. (1 Sam. 10:1. See also 1 Sam. 9:25-27.) Now since everything had passed off in such a glorious manner; and all the people were well pleased with Saul's ability as a leader, Samuel knew that the time had come for Saul to be publicly anointed and proclaimed as king. "And all the people went to Gilgal." Here all the people joined in making Saul their king. Sacrifices were offered; "and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly." The people had now gotten what they demanded, and their new king had just demonstrated his ability as a commander. And his physical appearance was all that could be desired in a king and military commander.

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

The people of Israel generally respected Samuel, for they knew him to be a good man, a fair judge, and a prophet of Jehovah; but they were so determined to have a king that they would not listen to him about the king they so desired, even when he told them what Jehovah said. They rejected Jehovah as their king. They preferred a man as their king rather than Jehovah.

Samuel was not entirely blameless in the matter of the kingdom. He had made his worthless sons deputy judges. The people knew that they accepted bribes and perverted justice. This gave the elders an excuse, but not a valid reason, to ask for a king. The abuse of God's plan does not give objectors to this abuse the right to establish a plan of their own. People should think of this when they are tempted to inaugurate a plan of their own in protest against the abuse of God's plan.

To change God's order is to reject him as king—it is to assume his place. The people of Israel could honor Jehovah as king only by observing his commandments and walking in his ways. People talk much of Christ as our Savior, and fail to honor him as king, forgetting that he will save no one in whose heart he is not allowed to reign as king. Think on this.



**TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION**

The life and character of Samuel.  
 The demand for a king.  
 Saul as he was when anointed king.  
 Saul's first battle.

**QUESTIONS**

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

**Lesson Settings**

Give time, places, and persons.  
 Give some points on the early life of Samuel.  
 What is said of his sons?  
 Tell about the demand for a king, and what Jehovah said to Samuel about it.

**Verses 15-17**

Tell about Saul's first meeting with Samuel.  
 Who selected Saul to be king?

**Verses 18-21**

Tell about Samuel's anointing Saul.

What did Saul say about himself?

**1 Sam. 10:25-27**

Give Samuel's description of the kingdom.  
 What did the people say in reply?  
 Where was Saul's home at this time?  
 Who would not recognize Saul as their leader?

**1 Sam. 11:12, 13**

Tell why Saul fought the Ammonites.  
 What were the results?

**Verses 14, 15**

Tell about renewing the kingdom at Gilgal.  
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson X—September 3, 1944

**SAUL REJECTED**

1 Sam. 15:10-23

10 Then came the word of Jehovah unto Samuel, saying,

11 It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And Samuel was wroth; and he cried unto Jehovah all night.

12 And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning; and it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a monument, and turned, and passed on, and went down to Gilgal.

13 And Samuel came to Saul; and Saul said unto him; Blessed be thou of Jehovah: I have performed the commandment of Jehovah.

14 And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

15 And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalikites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

16 Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what Jehovah hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.

17 And Samuel said, Though thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel? And Jehovah anointed thee king over Israel;

18 And Jehovah sent thee on a journey, and said, Go, and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed.

19 Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of Jehovah, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah?

20 And Saul said unto Samuel. Yea, I have obeyed the voice of Jehovah. and have gone the way which Jehovah sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen. the chief of the devoted things, to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God in Gilgal.

22 And Samuel said, Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, he hath also rejected thee from being king." (1 Sam. 15:23.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Psalm 15.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

August	28.	M	The King's Folly (1 Sam. 13:8-14)
August	29.	T	Jehovah's Command to the King (1 Sam. 15:1-9)
August	30.	W	The King's Disobedience (1 Sam. 15:10-16)
August	31.	T	The King's Rejection Foretold (1 Sam. 15:24-31)
September	1.	F	The Death of the King (1 Sam. 31:1-6)
September	9.	S	The Danger of Disobedience (Heb. 6:1-8)
September	3.	S	The Call to Repentance (Rev. 2:1-7)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Hales, Usher, and Calmet give respectively the following dates: 1108 B.C.; 1093 B.C.; 1089 B.C.

*Place.*—Gilgal.

*Persons.*—Jehovah, Samuel, King Saul, and Agag king of Amalek.

*Lesson Links.*—When Samuel assembled the people at Gilgal to renew the kingdom, he made a short speech to the assembly, in which he challenged them to find any fault with the way he had conducted himself. They replied, "Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand." Then Samuel spoke to them of Jehovah's dealings with the nation in the past—that when they had been overcome by their enemies, and then repented, Jehovah raised up a deliverance. "And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay, but a king shall reign over us; when Jehovah your God was your king." But Jehovah would continue to bless them, and also their king, if they and their king would fear and serve Jehovah. Jehovah would allow them to try out their own plan under the most favorable circumstances, that they might learn that Jehovah's way is the only safe way. But Samuel would prove to them that their wickedness in demanding a king was great. It was the time of wheat harvest, the season in which no rains came. "is it not wheat harvest to-day? I will call unto Jehovah, that he may send thunder and rain; and ye shall know and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of Jehovah, in asking you a king. So Samuel called unto Jehovah; and Jehovah sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared Jehovah and Samuel. And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto Jehovah thy God, that we die not; for we have added unto all our sins, this evil, to ask us a king." (Read I Sam. 12.)

By reading the thirteenth chapter the student will see that the Philistines had overrun the land of Israel; they had not left a metalworker in the whole land. (Verses 19-21.) Saul had a small army—two thousand were with him at Michmash and one thousand were with Jonathan at Gibeon of Saul. "And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba; and the Philistines heard of it." This stirred the Philistines to gather a great army to fight against Israel. The outcome of this is told in the remaining part of the thirteenth chapter and the fourteenth chapter. It is a thrilling bit of history, which the student should be sure to read.

**COMMENTS ON THE LESSON****Saul's Conduct Angers Samuel (Verses 10, 11)**

Unless we read the first nine verses of chapter fifteen, we miss the full significance of this lesson. "And Samuel said unto Saul, Jehovah sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, I have marked that which Amalek did to Israel, how he set himself against him in the way, when he came up out of Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." According to Hales it had been over five hundred years since Amalek fought against Israel but a short time after Israel came out of Egypt; according to other chronologists it had been but a little over four hundred years. But with Jehovah it was the same as if it had been but the day before; for "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Pet. 3:8.) Someone has said that all time is an eternal now with the Lord. Of course this decree for the destruction of Amalek shows that the Amalekites had not changed their ways during all these centuries. The world is better off without such people.

The instructions given Saul were plain, and Saul understood them. Saul gathered an army at Telaim, "two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah. And Saul came to the city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley. And Saul said unto the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them; for ye showed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. And Saul smote the Amalekites, from Havilah as thou goest to Shur, that is before Egypt. And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly. Then came the word of Jehovah unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments." This shows that the way to follow Jehovah is to do as he commands; to fail to perform his commandments is to turn back from following him. That point is clearly set forth., It is vain today to talk about following the Lord Jesus Christ, unless we do his commandments. People who speak lightly of any of the commands of our Lord, and teach that it is not necessary to do as he commands, are not following him. Saul attempted to serve Jehovah, not as Jehovah commanded, but as he himself thought to do, "And Samuel was wroth." Such disobedience angered Samuel, and we can know that Samuel was sorely disappointed; so disturbed was he that he spent the whole night in prayer.

**Saul Says He Obeyed Jehovah (Verses 12, 13)**

Saul's first great sin after he became king is recorded in chapter 13, verses 8-14. It seems that Samuel had appointed to meet Saul at Gilgal at a given time. The Philistines were gathering their

forces to fight Israel, and the people of Israel were so frightened that they were hiding from the Philistines. Sacrifices were to be made at Gilgal. Saul came to Gilgal, but Samuel did not come at the appointed time; and so Saul, though he had no authority to do so, offered the burnt offering. When Samuel came, and asked Saul what he had done, Saul sought to justify himself in these words: "Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines assembled themselves together at Michmash; therefore said I, Now will the Philistines come down upon me to Gilgal, and I have not entreated the favor of Jehovah: I forced myself therefore, and offered the burnt-offering." But Samuel said, "Thou hast done foolishly; thou hast not kept the commandment of Jehovah thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would Jehovah have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue." And now Saul has committed another grievous sin, in that he substituted his own way against Jehovah's way. He evidently thought he could make some improvements on Jehovah's way. But it seems that he had full confidence that he had done the right thing; for when Samuel came down to Gilgal, whither Saul had gone, Saul said to him, "Blessed be thou of Jehovah: I have performed the commandment of Jehovah." If, in view of what he had done, that statement seems strange to you, just think of the thousands today who think they are serving God faithfully, and yet do not even know what the commands of God are; and of the many other thousands who think it does not make any difference whether we do exactly what God says, "just so our hearts are right." But the trouble with people who so think is, their hearts are not right toward God. The heart that is right wants to do all that God commands.

#### **Saul's Excuse (Verses 14, 15)**

Saul did not receive Samuel; he inquired, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen?" Saul then sought to shift the blame to the people—to his army; "They have brought them from the Amalekites." They had disobeyed Jehovah in sparing the best of the sheep and oxen to sacrifice to Jehovah—disobeyed Jehovah in order to make a big show in worshiping him with the fruit of their sin! It is never appropriate to make a big show in worship. To do evil in order to make a big show in worship is to be guilty of a double sin. And they were guilty in another way—they would sacrifice to Jehovah that which did not belong to them. David refused to offer a burnt offering to Jehovah that cost him nothing. (2 Sam. 24:22-24.)

#### **Samuel Delivers Jehovah's Rebuke to Saul (Verses 16-19)**

Jehovah had given Samuel a message to deliver to Saul. From what Saul had already said about his obedience, it is not at all likely that he expected to hear anything but that which was good and pleasing to him. He doubtless thought his great scheme should be praised. He intended to slay all these animals anyway; so why not bring them to Gilgal, and have a great feast? Through Samuel Jehovah reminds Saul that he was little in his own eyes when he was made king. This was a rebuke to Saul for becoming so great in his own eyes as to think he could improve on Jehovah's com-

mands. "And Jehovah sent thee on a journey." The war with the Amalekites, with the help of Jehovah, was but a journey through their land. But Saul had not obeyed the plain command of Jehovah. "Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of Jehovah, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah?" To change God's order to suit our own notions and desires is not obedience at all. There is just one way to obey God, and that is to do what he says, and because he says it. Anything short of that is disobedience. These Old Testament happenings are examples to us, and show us what we may expect if we change God's order of things. It is therefore important that we study them carefully, and seek to profit by them.

### **Obedience Emphasized (Verses 20-23)**

Saul knew what Jehovah had commanded, and he knew what he had done. It is strange that he would persist in affirming that he had obeyed Jehovah. "Yea, I have obeyed the voice of Jehovah

....

But the people took of the spoil . . . to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God in Gilgal." He felt that he needed some defense, and that speech was the best defense he could make; but it was a very flimsy defense, a mere excuse. An excuse usually fools no one but the person who makes it. That excuse did not convince Samuel that Saul was guiltless. "And Samuel said, Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah?" Of course when burnt offerings and sacrifices were commanded, no one could obey Jehovah without offering the burnt offerings and making the sacrifices; but Jehovah had not commanded such offerings and sacrifices as Saul and the people proposed to make. They could not honor Jehovah by following their own ways. They had obtained the animals for such sacrifices as they proposed to make by direct disobedience to the plain command of Jehovah. Such offerings would have been no sacrifice to them. Obedience would have been better than all such offerings they could make, though they had made a great display in offering them up in one grand celebration. Saul was at the head of the army that went out against the Amalekites, and was responsible for the way God's commands were executed; he had miserably failed, even though now he slaughtered all the animals for burnt offerings. Samuel calls Saul's conduct rebellion; it was the outcome of a spirit of stubbornness. "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim." It seems that teraphim were household gods, supposed to bring good luck to the family, in prosperity and health. When a man's stubbornness leads him to reject the plain word of God, he thereby rejects Jehovah as his God. Such a person really exalts himself as his own god, and that is like any other sort of idolatry. Many people, even those who profess to be Christians, bow at the shrine of their own mind and follow its dictations instead of the word of God, and that is idolatry. It is a plain rejection of God. Again Saul is told that he has been rejected from being king.

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

Read verses 24-26. Saul confessed his sin, and yet tried to evade full responsibility by saying that he feared the people, He obeyed the people instead of Jehovah. Saul was not a physical coward, but

he was a moral coward—he could not go against the desires of his beloved army. There are people who do not fear an enemy, but they are afraid to go against the desires and pleadings of their friends. It is always hard to go against the pleadings of friends who have stood by us through thick and thin. We do not like for them to call us stubborn, and say we have turned against them. Yet Jehovah regarded Saul as stubborn because he did obey the voice of friends instead of the voice of Jehovah. Only a stubborn and rebellious heart will deliberately disobey the plain commands of the Bible,

It seems that Saul did not know how to make a clean-cut confession, or else he did not want to do so. He made a sort of confession with defense, and that is no confession at all. There are too many pretended confessions of that sort. It was useless for Saul to ask Samuel to pray for him. "And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee; for thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, and Jehovah hath rejected thee from being king over Israel."

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The demand for a king.  
Saul's war on the Amalekites.  
"To obey is better than sacrifice."

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
Tell about Samuel's challenge to the people at Gilgal, and their reply.  
How did he prove to them that Jehovah was speaking through him?  
Give some account of Israel's trouble with the Philistines at this time.

#### Verses 10, 11

What command did Jehovah give Saul through Samuel?  
Why this command?  
What did Saul do about carrying out that command?  
What did Jehovah say to Samuel about what Saul had done?  
What is it to follow the Lord?

#### Verses 12, 13

Tell about Saul's first great sin after he became king.  
What did Saul say to Samuel about carrying out God's orders?  
How are people somewhat like that today?

#### Verses 14, 15

Discuss these verses, and their lesson to us.

#### Verses 16-19

Discuss what Jehovah through Samuel said to Saul.

#### Verses 20-23

Discuss Saul's reply to Samuel.  
What did Samuel say in reply?  
What is obedience, and why obey?  
How may a person make an idol of his own mind?  
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XI—September 10, 1944

### DAVID ANOINTED KING

1 Sam. 16:1-5, 11-18

1 And Jehovah said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from being king over Israel? fill thy horn with oil, and go: I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite; for I have provided me a king among his sons.

2 And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And Jehovah said, Take a heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to Jehovah.

3 And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee.

4 And Samuel did that which Jehovah spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, Comest thou peaceably?

5 And he said, Peaceably; I am come to sacrifice unto Jehovah: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

11 And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he is keeping the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he come hither.

12 And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon. And Jehovah said, Arise, anoint him; for this is he.

13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

14 Now the Spirit of Jehovah departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from Jehovah troubled him.

15 And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee.

16 Let our lord now command thy servants, that are before thee, to seek out a man who is a skillful player on the harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.

17 And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me.

18 Then answered one of the young men, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is skillful in playing, and a mighty man of valor, and a man of war, and prudent in speech, and a comely person; and Jehovah is with him.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart." (1 Sam. 16:7.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Psalm 72:12-19.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

September 4.	M	God Provides a King (1 Sam. 16:1-5)
September 5.	T	David Anointed King (1 Sam. 16:6-13)
September 6.	W	David and Jonathan (1 Sam. 20:35-42)
September 7.	T	David Spares Saul (1 Sam. 24:1-7)
September 8.	F	David in Favor with God (Psalm 89:19-28)
September 9.	S	God's Covenant with David (Psalm 132:1-11)
September 10.	S	The Covenant Kept (Acts 2:29-36)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably about 1063 B.C.

*Places.*—Ramah and Bethlehem.

*Persons.*—Jehovah, Samuel, Jesse, and Jesse's sons.

*Lesson Links.*—Although the kingdom of Israel under a human king was conceived in sin and brought forth in rebellion against Jehovah, he promised to be with both the king and the people, so long as both king and people obeyed his voice. (1 Sam. 12:14, 15.) And though Saul began his reign under these definite assurances of Jehovah, he soon fell into sin. And because of this sin the prophet Samuel said to him, "Thou hast done foolishly; thou hast not kept the commandment of Jehovah thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would Jehovah have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: Jehovah hath sought him a man after his own heart, and Jehovah hath appointed him to be prince over his people, because thou hast not kept that which Jehovah commanded thee." (1 Sam. 13:13, 14.) Because

Jehovah sought a man after his own heart to be prince over his people does not prove that the kingdom itself was after Jehovah's own heart. The people had rejected Jehovah from being their king. The people of Israel were still Jehovah's people; but while Saul reigned as king it was his kingdom, and so with each succeeding king. The kingdom over Israel really belonged to Jehovah—it was his by right; but the people had rejected him. They had dethroned him, so to speak, and asked that a man be put in his stead. It was not therefore a divine kingdom; it was human in its origin and in its operations. Jehovah tolerated it, but did not endorse it. Will a kingdom which began in rebellion—which began by rejecting Jehovah as king—be restored?

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### **"How Long Wilt Thou Mourn for Saul?" (Verse 1)**

Samuel was greatly disappointed in Saul, and mourned for his downfall; but that was useless, for he could do nothing about it. Jehovah had rejected him, and that was final. And yet many times we mourn, when our mourning cannot remedy anything. We cannot keep from it. Samuel had had great hopes for Saul; now these hopes were blasted. "Fill thy horn with oil, and go: I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite; for I have provided me a king among his sons." Jesse was the grandson of Boaz and Ruth, the Moabitess. (Ruth 4:18-22.) Bethlehem is one of the very old towns of Palestine. It was in existence when Jacob returned to Palestine after he fled to Paddan-aram from the wrath of his brother. (Gen. 35:9.) It was at first called Ephrath; and so Jesse is called "that Ephrathite of Bethlehem-judah." (1 Sam. 17:12.) After the children of Israel conquered the land, the town was usually referred to as Bethlehem. There has never been any dispute as to the site of Bethlehem; it appears to have had a continuous existence from the time of its founding down to the present time. In this connection the student should find the book of Ruth as fascinating as any piece of literature he ever read. In Bethlehem David was born. Here also Jesus was born. Bethlehem therefore has a fame that will never perish, even though it continues to be only a village.

#### **Samuel Fears Saul (Verses 2, 3)**

Samuel knew what a tyrant Saul had come to be. Saul, like any tyrant, was for a man so long as he could use him; but he would kill any man who might seem to be against him. The horn of oil and the statement, of verse 1, could mean only one thing; namely, that Samuel was to anoint a son of Jesse as king. Samuel knew the possible outcome of such an act. "If Saul hear it, he will kill me." The spirit of tyranny is always the same—no different then from what it is now. Yes, Saul would have killed the venerable and honorable Samuel, the man whom the whole nation revered, to keep him from doing anything that would imperil the perpetuation of his kingdom in his family. But Samuel must not let it be known openly that he was going to Bethlehem to anoint a king, but rather to offer sacrifices to Jehovah. Jehovah was in control of all the proceedings; he would show Samuel what to do. "I will show thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee."



**"Comest Thou Peaceably?" (Verses 4, 5)**

Samuel promptly obeyed Jehovah, and went to Bethlehem. His coming had not been announced to Bethlehem. Just why the elders feared we are not told; but it seems that they were very much disturbed, for they met him trembling. There must have been something wrong in their management of affairs in their city; and knowing Samuel had long been both judge and prophet, they must have feared that he did not come with peaceful intent. So they said, "Comest thou peaceably?" But Samuel did not tell them the real purpose of his coming; to let them know the real purpose of his coming would do them no good, and might work harm. The whole town would not keep a secret; in some way word would reach Saul, if the people of Bethlehem knew the real mission of Samuel. The fact that Samuel was doing exactly what Jehovah had commanded him to do would not have weight with Saul; he was too far gone in rebellion to care anything about any move Jehovah inaugurated. He would regard Samuel as in rebellion against him, even if Jehovah was directing the movements of Samuel. This Samuel well knew; and so he kept his mission veiled under the claim that he had come to offer a sacrifice. He invited the elders to sanctify themselves, and to go with him to the sacrifice. "And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice." Jesse and his sons, of course, knew nothing of what was the purpose of Samuel's mission; but Samuel may have informed Jesse before the anointing occurred. At least things seemed to work out in such a way as to indicate that Jesse knew Samuel's real purpose.

**"Jehovah Looketh on the Heart" (Verses 6-10)**

The lesson is not complete without these verses which are not included in the printed text: "And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely Jehovah's anointed is before him." It is not likely that Samuel spoke this out loud, but only to himself. To him Eliab looked the part of a king; he was forming an opinion based on appearances. We gather from Samuel's opinion that Eliab was a fine-looking specimen of manhood. "But Jehovah said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have rejected him: for Jehovah seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart." Only Jehovah knows the hearts of all men. (1 Kings 8:39; 1 Chron. 28:9.) The heart determines the man. It is not enough to have good thoughts and good intentions: a man must be sufficiently steadfast of heart to stay with what he knows to be right. Eliab was not the kind of man Jehovah wanted. Seven sons of Jesse passed by, and Jehovah rejected all of the seven.

**David, the Youngest Son, Chosen (Verses 11-13)**

"And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children?" Apparently Samuel was puzzled; Jehovah had rejected all the sons that Jesse had presented, and there was not another in sight. Yet Jehovah had said, "I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite; for I have provided me a king among his sons." He could not doubt Jehovah, and so he must have thought that Jesse was holding out one or more of his sons. Hence his inquiry: "Are here all thy children?" Oil yes, "there remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold,

he is keeping the sheep." If Samuel had informed Jesse as to the reason for this gathering, as he most likely had done, Jesse had not thought it possible that David, a mere lad, would be Jehovah's choice. But Jehovah does not see things as man sees. "And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he come hither." The feast would have to wait until this youngest son was brought. The son whom Jesse thought to be of the least importance turned out to be the most important. "And he sent, and brought him in." Of course David had no idea as to what was to be done. "Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon." For "beautiful countenance" the marginal reading has, "Heb. fair of eyes." The Jewish translation has, "Now he was ruddy, having withal handsome eyes, and being of a goodly appearance." David was no weakling, but a fine specimen of manhood. Notice what David later said to King Saul: "Thy servant was keeping his father's sheep; and when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him." (1 Sam. 17:34, 35.) As soon as David was brought before Samuel, Jehovah said to him, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren." It does not seem that his brethren knew why this anointing was done; for when later Jesse sent David to carry food to his brethren who were in Saul's army, and David asked questions about Goliath's challenge, "Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why art thou come down? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thy heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle." (1 Sam. 17:28.) When David was anointed the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him. This evidently endowed him with greater physical power and wisdom. So soon as the ceremonies were all over Samuel returned to his home in Ramah.

### **An Evil Spirit Troubles Saul (Verses 14-18)**

Saul had brought trouble on himself. How much he had worried over the fact that both Samuel and Jehovah had rejected him we have no means of knowing; but it does seem that he would have felt the loss keenly. But it seems that these verses come in out of their chronological order; for things are said of David in verse 18 that it does not seem could have been said of him until later. "Then answered one of the young men, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is skillful in playing, and a mighty man of valor, and a man of war, and prudent in speech, and a comely person; and Jehovah is with him." And then notice this: "And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O King, I cannot tell. And the king said, Inquire thou whose son the stripling is." (1 Sam. 17:55, 56.) These things—verses 14 to 23—may have been recorded out of their chronological order because it was a suitable time to give a contrast between the behavior of David and that of Saul. Saul started out with great promise; how different now. Rejected by Jehovah and forsaken by Samuel, he could see no bright future.

He had the declaration of Jehovah that the kingdom would pass from his house to another. We cannot imagine the depressing effects of all these things upon a high spirited man like Saul. It must have had a great effect on Saul's mental balance. Evil does not always mean wickedness. Sickness, whether physical or mental, is an evil, as is also any calamity. This evil spirit from Jehovah troubled Saul; it does not necessarily mean that it made him any more sinful; his mental condition was an evil. It was a condition that music apparently relieved; it soothed and calmed him. No, it did not drive the devil out of him; it did not make him any better servant of Jehovah; it did not in any way improve his character. When Saul's servants suggested music as a remedy for his troubles, he said to them, "Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me." It resulted in David's being brought before Saul; and for a time Saul loved David greatly. Later Saul became David's most bitter and determined enemy. The story of Saul, David, and Jonathan is a most interesting bit of history.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

One of the most interesting characters in all the Bible is David. Jehovah bore witness of him, saying, "I have found David, {he son of Jesse, a man after my heart." (Acts 13:22.) Samuel had said to Saul, "Jehovah hath sought him a man after his own heart." (1 Sam. 13:14.) David was that man. David was not perfect in all his ways, but committed some grievous sins. However, when he came to take stock of himself, and had seen how grievously he had sinned, he freely confessed his sins without making any effort to justify himself; nor did he seek to lay the blame on someone else. When Nathan the prophet rebuked him for his great sin with Bathsheba, David said, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight." (Psalm 51:1-4.)

David also had great reverence for Jehovah and all that pertained to him.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

How Saul degenerated.  
Some evils are not sins.  
David's readiness to confess his sins.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
What did Jehovah promise concerning the people and their king?  
Discuss the statement in I Sam. 13:13, 14.  
What of the nature of the kingdom of which Saul was the first king?

#### Verse 1

What did Jehovah command Samuel to do?  
Tell about Bethlehem.

#### Verses 2, 3

Why did Samuel fear to do as commanded?  
How did Jehovah assure him?

#### Verses 4, 5

What effect did his coming have on the elders of Bethlehem?

Why had he come to Bethlehem?  
 What did he tell the elders?  
 Why keep his real purpose a secret?  
 Who went to the sacrifice?

How many sons of Jesse had been rejected?  
 Give Samuel's question and Jesse's answer.  
 What did Samuel then say?  
 Discuss the remaining part of the incident.

**Verses 6-10**

Discuss the contents of these intervening verses.

**Verses 14-18**

Discuss these verses, especially the different kinds of evils.

**Verses 11-13**

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XII—September 17, 1944

**THE KINGDOM STRONGLY ESTABLISHED**

2 Sam. 2:4-7; 5:1-10

4 And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, The men of Jabesh-gilead were they that buried Saul.

5 And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them, Blessed be ye of Jehovah, that ye have showed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him.

6 And now Jehovah show lovingkindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.

7 Now therefore let your hands be strong, and be ye valiant; for Saul your lord is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

1 Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh.

2 In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was thou that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and Jehovah said to thee, Thou shalt be shepherd of my people Israel, and thou shalt be prince over Israel.

3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a covenant with them in Hebron before Jehovah: and they anointed David king over Israel.

4 David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years.

5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.

6 And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither; thinking, David cannot come in hither.

7 Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion; the same is the city of David.

8 And David said on that day, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites, let him get up to the watercourse, and smite the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul. Wherefore they say, There are the blind and the lame; he cannot come into the house.

9 And David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Milio and inward.

10 And David waxed greater and greater; for Jehovah, the God of hosts, was with him.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"They that trust in Jehovah are as mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abideth for ever." (Psalm 125:1.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Psalm 125.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

September 11. M

September 12. T

September 13. W

September 14. T

David King Over Judah (2 Sam. 2:1-?)

David King Over Israel and Judah (2 Sam. 5:1-5)

The Kingdom Established (2 Sam. 5:6-12)

Jehovah's Promises to David (1 Chron. 17:7-15)

September 15. F  
 September 16. S  
 September 17. S

David's Faith (1 Chron. 17:16-27)  
 Jehovah Enthroned Among the Nations (Jer. 3:11-18)  
 Jehovah Protects His People (Psalm 125:1-5)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—According to Usher, David was anointed king over Judah at Hebron 1056 B.C.; according to Hales, 1070 B.C. Seven years and six months later, David was anointed king over all Israel.

*Place.*—David was anointed king over Judah at Hebron; later he was anointed king over Israel at Hebron. Hebron is one of the most ancient cities now existing. It is located about eighteen miles south of Jerusalem. "Much of the lifetime of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was spent in this neighborhood, where they were all entombed." It was the seat of David's government for seven and a half years.

*Persons.*—David, the people of Judah, the men of Jabesh-gilead, and all the tribes of Israel, also the Jebusites of Jerusalem.

*Lesson Links.*—David came into prominence at a time when King Saul was being sorely pressed in his war with the Philistines. A great giant in the army of the Philistines, Goliath of Gath, was challenging Israel to send out a man to fight him, and to let the issue of that fight determine which nation would serve the other. The armies were facing each other. "And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together." Such talk from such a giant frightened Saul and his men. About this time David came with food for his brothers who were in the army and heard what the giant said. David said to the men of the army of Israel, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" What then occurred—how David slew the giant—is well known. (1 Sam. 17.) Then Saul had a talk with David, and was so pleased with him, that he kept him in his service. But David's success and the praises of the people soon stirred up jealousy in the heart of Saul; this jealousy soon grew into hatred and enmity. He sought to kill David with his spear, but failed. Jonathan greatly loved David. But Saul feared David, and that fear increased. (1 Sam. 18:12, 29.) Saul ordered Jonathan and his servants to kill David; but Jonathan made such a plea for David, that Saul made a solemn promise on oath that David would not be put to death. But a tyrant keeps only such promises as he deems profitable to him to keep. Soon David had to flee from Saul. (Chapter 19.) In hiding David gathered a small army, and Saul hunted him with an army. On more than one occasion David could have easily killed Saul, and would have done so, had not Saul been the Lord's anointed. David still regarded Saul as Jehovah's king. David had slain many other men, but Saul was Jehovah's anointed; that was different. It was not his regard for Saul as a man that held him back, but his regard—his reverence—for Jehovah and anything pertaining to Jehovah kept him from killing Saul. It is a careless reader who thinks David refrained from killing Saul because he would do to others as he would have them do to him. With that misapplication of the Golden Rule, he would not have killed Goliath and many others. David gives his reason for sparing Saul. "Jehovah forbid that I should... put forth my hand against . . . Jehovah's anointed." (See I Sam. 24:6; 26:6-11.) It is not right to misapply a fact or a scripture even to

support a correct principle. We should not handle the word of God deceitfully. (2 Cor. 4:2.)

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### David Anointed King Over Judah (Verse 4a)

Through weary years David had skillfully eluded King Saul. Now Saul was dead, having been slain, and also three of his sons, in battle with the Philistines. (1 Sam. 31.) A young man, an Amalekite who had apparently been in Saul's army, came to David's camp in Ziklag and reported the outcome of the battle; he also reported that he had, at Saul's request, killed Saul after Saul had fallen mortally wounded. He evidently thought David would reward him for having a part in ending the life of one who had so long and so persistently sought to kill David; but he was badly mistaken in David. David said to him, "How wast thou not afraid to put forth thy hand to destroy Jehovah's anointed?" Then David ordered one of his young men to kill the young Amalekite, saying to the Amalekite, "Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain Jehovah's anointed." (Chapter 1.) Then followed David's lamentation over Saul and Jonathan, which concludes with these beautiful sentiments: "How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan is slain upon thy high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!"

By inquiring of Jehovah David learned that he should go from Ziklag to Hebron; and so David went to Hebron, taking with him his family and all the men that were with him and their families. "And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah." Samuel had anointed David at Bethlehem about eight years previous to this anointing at Hebron. (1 Sam. 16:1-13.)

#### David and the Men of Jabesh-gilead (Verses 4b-7)

When the Philistines gained the battle on Mount Gilboa, and Saul had been slain, and his sons, and while engaged the next day in their ghoulish work of robbing the dead, they found the bodies of Saul and his three sons; these they took to Beth-shan, and nailed them to a wall, perhaps to the wall at the main entrance to the city. See marginal reading of 2 Sam. 21:12. "And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard concerning him that which the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan; and they came to Jabesh, and burnt them there. And they took their bones, and buried them under the tamarisk-tree in Jabesh, and fasted seven days." (1 Sam. 31:11-13.) When David became king over Judah, he sent messengers to Jabesh-gilead with a message of praise for what they had done, and also with a pledge to them to requite them for what they had done in showing such kindness to Saul. Perhaps he meant also to gain their good will toward him as king of Judah, though Jabesh was not in the territory of Judah. "Now therefore let your hands be strong, and be ye valiant; for Saul your lord is dead, and also the house of Judah

have anointed me king over them." David's exhortation to Jabesh-gilead is worthy to be cherished in our own hearts—"let your hands be strong, and be ye valiant." "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." (1 Cor. 16:13.) "Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might." (Eph. 6:10.)

### **David Anointed King Over All Israel (2 Sam. 5:1-5)**

Not all Israel immediately accepted David as king. "Now Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, had taken Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim; and he made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel." (Verses 8, 9.) His making Ishbosheth king over all Israel shows that he did not recognize David as the rightful ruler even over Judah. And so war broke out between the two, Abner leading the forces of Ishbosheth and Joab leading the forces of David. "Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: and David waxed stronger and stronger, but the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker." (2 Sam. 3:1.) Abner finally grew tired of the war, and he made a proposition to the tribes under Ishbosheth to make David their king. When he went to confer with David about the matter, he was treacherously slain by Joab. David's behavior in the matter was such that all Israel knew he was blameless in the matter. "So all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner. And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel? And I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah are too hard for me: Jehovah reward the evil-doer according to his wickedness." The student should read the third and fourth chapters.

When Ishbosheth had been murdered by two brothers, and they in turn had been slain by order of David, "all the tribes of Israel" came to David, and made a speech that must have pleased David. "We are thy bone and thy flesh." In this they showed that they recognized their close kinship to David. And they gave David to understand that they had not forgotten how he used to be their leader in war; nor had they forgotten that Jehovah had said to David, "Thou shalt be shepherd of my people Israel, and thou shalt be prince over Israel." David made a covenant with them, but we are not informed as to the nature of that covenant; but it was likely that they agreed to serve under him on condition that none should be punished for their war against him. And the third time he was anointed; this time over all Israel. The breach was healed; the kingdom was no longer divided. David was thirty years old when he began to reign over Judah; after seven and a half years of reigning over Judah, he became king over all Israel; in all he had a long reign of forty years. During his reign David was to be more than a mere ruler; he was to be shepherd of the people. He was to lead the people in the way that was good for them. He set the example of reverence for Jehovah and his law. He was a great teacher as well as a great king.

### **David and the Jebusites (Verses 6-10)**

Jerusalem was really within the territory allotted to Benjamin. "And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that

inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day"; that is, unto the day in which this was written. (Judges 1:21.) In David's early reign the Jebusites had, it seems, a strongly fortified portion of Jerusalem, known as Zion. When David and his men went to Jerusalem to drive out the Jebusites, the Jebusites said to David, "Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither." By this statement they meant that David could not come in to drive them out. Commentators have done a lot of worrying about this statement of the Jebusites; but why? It seems to be a piece of irony on the part of the Jebusites, as if to say, "And so you have come up to drive us out of our stronghold; you could not come in against an army of blind and lame men." "Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion; the same is the city of David." This part of Jerusalem became known as the city of David. In making the following statement it seems that David adopted the irony of the Jebusites: "Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites, let him get up to the watercourse, and smite the lame and the blind." This must have been spoken in irony; for it is not reasonable that so vital a thing as the watercourse, the aqueduct, should be defended by the really blind and lame. Out of this grew the saying: "There are the blind and the lame; he cannot come into the house." This would be spoken in contempt for the supposed weakness of an enemy. No place is defended by real blind and lame men; it is absurd to think that men so helpless would be placed to defend anything. "And David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the city of David." This became the place of the permanent residence of the king, and David improved its defenses. Jehovah promised at the beginning of the kingdom under Saul to be with the people and their king so long as both obeyed him. For the most part of his long reign David was obedient to Jehovah, though he did commit some grievous sins. "And David waxed greater and greater; for Jehovah, the God of hosts, was with him." If Jehovah is with a person, a group, or a nation, he will give peace and prosperity. But when people choose their own way, regardless of him, he will leave them to their own devices; and their own ways bring destruction upon them. (Read 1 Chron. 11:1-9.)

### SOME REFLECTIONS

One of the singular things in the history of Israel is, that the Jebusites had been allowed to remain in a certain portion of the city of Jerusalem; but in all the years they had been allowed to remain there it does not seem that they had been a disturbing element in the land. When David conquered them, there is no evidence that those who survived the battle were driven out of the land, nor that they were disturbed in their possessions. In fact Araunah, a Jebusite, is mentioned as owning property near the close of David's reign. This fact is recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of 2 Sam. The student should be sure to read that interesting chapter. It shows the pride of David in numbering Israel over the protest of his leading men, and also his humility and penitence for so doing. "I have sinned, and I have done perversely; but these sheep, what have they done? let thy hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house." This confession is characteristic of David; he did not try to justify himself, nor did he lay any blame on anyone else.



But David was wise enough to know that any other sort of confession was in reality no confession at all. It is a pity that many today who think they are confessing their sins do not know what it is to make a wholehearted confession.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

David the man.  
David the king.  
David the warrior.  
David the servant of Jehovah.  
David the poet.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
Describe the incident that brought David into prominence.  
Tell about the relation between Saul and David.  
Why did David later not kill Saul?

#### Verse 4a

Who brought word of Saul's death to David, and what did this messenger say he had done?  
What did David say and do?  
Give the closing words of David's lamentation over Saul and Jonathan.  
Where was David, and to what city did he go?  
Over whom was he anointed king?

#### Verses 4b-7

Relate what the men of Jabesh did for which

David praised them.  
What exhortation did he give the men of Jabesh?  
What similar exhortations are given us?

#### 2 Sam. 5:1-5

Tell about Abner and Saul's son Ishbosheth.  
How did Abner meet his death?  
How did David show the people that he had no part in Abner's death?  
What became of Ishbosheth?  
Then what did all Israel do?

#### Verses 6-10

What is said of the Jebusites and the children of Benjamin?  
What did David proceed to do with them?  
How did they taunt David?  
What did David do, and what did he call that part of Jerusalem?  
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XIII—September 24, 1944

### RELIGION IN THE LIFE OF A NATION

2 Sam. 7:17-29

17 According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

18 Then David the king went in, and sat before Jehovah; and he said, Who am I, O Lord Jehovah, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me thus far?

19 And this was yet a small thing in thine eyes, O Lord Jehovah; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come; and this too after the manner of men, O Lord Jehovah!

20 And what can David say more unto thee? for thou knowest thy servant, O Lord Jehovah.

21 For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou wrought all this greatness, to make thy servant know it.

22 Wherefore thou art great, O Jehovah God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

23 And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel whom God went to redeem unto himself for a people, and to make him a name, and to do great things for you, and terrible things for thy land, before thy people, whom thou redeemedst to thee out of Egypt, from the nations and their gods?

24 And thou didst establish to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever; and thou, Jehovah, becamest their God.

25 And now, O Jehovah God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, confirm thou it for ever, and do as thou hast spoken.

26 And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, Jehovah of hosts is God over Israel; and the house of thy servant David shall be established before thee.

27 For thou, O Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee a house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.

28 And now, O Lord Jehovah, thou art God, and thy words are truth, and thou hast promised this good thing unto thy servant:

29 Now therefore let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee; for thou, O Lord Jehovah, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Jehovah will be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory." (Isa. 60:19.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Isa. 60:15-22.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

September 18. M

September 19. T

September 20. W

September 21. T

September 22. F

September 23. S

September 24. S

David's Noble Purpose (2 Sam. 7:1-11)

Jehovah's Promise (2 Sam. 7:12-17)

The King's Thanksgiving (2 Sam. 7:18-29)

Jehovah's Wonderful Works (Psalm 105:1-8)

Recognizing Jehovah's Leadership (Deut. 8:11-20)

Jehovah's Righteous Rule (Isa. 51:4-8)

A Prayer for Peace (Psalm 122:1-9)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—About 1055 B.C.

*Place.*—Jerusalem, the capital city of the kingdom.

*Persons.*—Jehovah, David the king, and Nathan the prophet.

*Lesson Links.*—In our last lesson we learned that "David took the stronghold of Zion; the same is the city of David." This is the part of the city of Jerusalem formerly occupied by the Jebusites. In this part of Jerusalem David established his residence. "And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar-trees, and carpenters, and masons; and they built David a house." (2 Sam. 5:11.) Friendly relations between the king of Tyre and the king of Israel lasted for a long time. "Hiram was ever a lover of David." (1 Kings 5:1.) It is not likely that friendlier relations ever existed between two nations than existed between Israel and Tyre during the reigns of David and Solomon.

The Philistines were a warlike people, and soon made war against David. Because of their past experience with David as a warrior, it seems that they wanted to come against him before he had time to thoroughly organize his kingdom and his army. Their hatred of David must have been as great as was Hiram's love for him. They were badly defeated in two battles. (2 Sam. 5:17-21.) But the ark of God was still in the house of Abinadab. (1 Sam. 7:1, 2.) "And David consulted with the captains of thousands and of hundreds, even with every leader. And David said unto all the assembly of Israel, If it seem good unto you, and if it be of Jehovah our God, let us send abroad every where unto our brethren that are left in all the land of Israel, with whom the priests and Levites are in their cities that have suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us; and let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we sought

not unto it in the days of Saul. And all the assembly said that they would do so." (1 Chron. 13:1-4.) "And they carried the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab." On the way "Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put forth his hand to the ark; and there he died before God. And David was displeased, because Jehovah had broken forth upon Uzza .... So David removed not the ark unto him into the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. And the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom in his house three months: and Jehovah blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had." (1 Chron. 13:9-14.) Then David brought the ark into the city of David, and set it in the tent that David had pitched for it. The student should read the sixth chapter, and also the account in the thirteenth chapter of 1 Chron.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### **Nathan Repeats the Words of Jehovah to David (Verse 17)**

To learn what Nathan spoke to David the student must learn what is recorded in the first sixteen verses of this chapter. When David's house was finished and he had moved into it and was not then engaged in any war, he said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains." David did not feel comfortable in being better housed than the ark of God. It is likely that more words passed between David and Nathan than are here recorded. David's words seemed to please Nathan; so he said, "Go, do all that is in thy heart; for Jehovah is with thee." David was planning too fast—Jehovah had not spoken concerning the matter. The following is from the translation by Leeser, a Jewish translator; notice the change in verses 9 and 10: "And it came to pass during the night, that the word of the Lord came unto Nathan, saying, Go and say unto my servant, unto David, Thus hath said the Lord, Writ thou indeed build me a house for my dwelling? For I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even until this day; but have been moving about in a tent and in a tabernacle...'. I took thee from the sheepcote, from behind the flocks, to be a ruler over my people, over Israel; and I have been with thee whithersoever thou didst go, and I have cut off all thy enemies from thy presence, and I have made thee a great name, like the name of the great who are on the earth; and I have procured a place for my people, for Israel, and I have planted them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and be no more troubled; and that the children of wickedness shall not afflict them any more as aforesaid; . . . and the Lord telleth thee that he, the Lord, will make thee a house. When thy days will be completed, and thou wilt sleep with thy fathers: then will I set up thy seed after thee, who shall proceed out of thy body, and I will establish his kingdom. He it is that shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever ....But my kindness shall not depart from him, as I caused it to depart from Saul, whom I removed from before thee. And thy house and thy kingdom shall be Steadfast for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever." "According to all these words, and accord-

## LESSON XIII THIRD QUARTER

ing to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David." The student should not fail to read of this same incident as recorded in the seventeenth chapter of I Chron.

### **David Expresses His Humility (Verses 18-21)**

Not infrequently when a young man is taken from the lowly occupations of life, and exalted to a position of great honor and power, he becomes heady, overbearing, and tyrannical; he is without sympathy for those who are as he once was. There are exceptions even in this day. A great manufacturer is quoted as saying, "I remember how I wanted to be treated when I was at a bench, and I try to treat our people the same way." David remembered. When Nathan had finished repeating Jehovah's words, "then David the king went in, and sat before Jehovah." He went into the tent where the ark of God had been set. The lid of the ark with its cherubim was called the mercy seat; here Jehovah communed with the leaders of Israel. (Ex. 25:22.) Before the mercy seat on the ark of the covenant David sat, and talked to Jehovah. David had come a long way since he was a boy—all the way "from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to the throne of a kingdom. "Who am I, O Lord Jehovah, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me thus far?" David knew that, however great it seemed to him, it was a little matter in the eyes of Jehovah, who could do whatever he chose to do. But Jehovah had not only brought David from following sheep to be the king of a nation, but he had made promises concerning David's house, David's family, for a great while to come. The promise concerning the kingdom and the throne referred primarily to the Christ, who now rules over God's people. David feels that words cannot express his feelings of gratitude for such wonderful things. "And what can David say more unto thee? for thou knowest thy servant, O Lord Jehovah?" And he was glad that it was in Jehovah's heart to make these things of the future known to him.

### **David Praises Jehovah (Verses 22-24)**

"Wherefore thou art great, O Jehovah God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee." Because Jehovah was their God, there was no other nation in the earth like Israel, whom Jehovah had' redeemed out of Egypt to be his own possession. Israel had even come farther than had David they had come from serfdom in Egypt to be a great nation, dwelling in their own land, with Jehovah as their God, and with laws which Jehovah himself had made for them. God had done great and terrible things for them. (In this connection read Deut. 4:32-38.) As the throne and kingdom promise is fulfilled in Christ and his kingdom, so the promise that Israel would be his people forever refers to spiritual Israel. It will be noticed that Jehovah redeemed Israel, not only from their bondage in Egypt, but from "the nations and their gods." They had been redeemed from idols, but they returned to bondage to these idols at frequent intervals. Perhaps they had never been freer from idolatry than they were under the reign of David. With all his faults David was the greatest religious force the nation had had since it settled in Palestine. "And thou, Jehovah, becamest their God." "Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah, the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance." (Psalm 33:12.) When a

nation leaves God out of its plans and purposes, it starts out on a rock road to a bad ending.

### **Why David Prayed (Verses 25-27)**

One striking thing about the prayers of the Bible is, they are usually short; and they are to the point. The prayers of the Bible do not include everything that can be thought of, as some prayers of today do; they are made up of thanks and petitions of a specific nature. But there must be some encouragement, some hope of being heard, or they will be no real praying. If one thinks of prayer as a mere spiritual exercise, he does not really pray; he might as well say his piece to a post, or to an idol. The idolater in praying to his idol gets a better grade of spiritual exercise than such a person, for he hopes for a reward. David prayed because he believed Jehovah would answer prayer. He prayed that Jehovah's promises concerning himself and his house might be fulfilled. Perhaps he had in view the implied plea that he and his house might so conduct themselves as to make it possible for Jehovah to fulfill his promises to them. He did not doubt that God would do what he promised, if he and his house made the fulfillment of the promises possible. He knew, as any unbiased student of the Bible knows, that God's promises are conditional. In so far as the promises related to the kingdom then existing and its earthly throne, that kingdom ceased to exist, and no one now sits on that throne here on earth. There were therefore conditions to be fulfilled, and they were not fulfilled. That kingdom therefore did not continue. If the Jews were now given a land, and they sought to establish a kingdom, they could not put one of the seed of David on the throne. Not only have all family lineages been lost, but all tribal distinctions have been obliterated. And no Jew can now with any reason expect a Messiah to come of the tribe of Judah and of the seed of Abraham.

### **David Knew the Promises Were Conditional (Verses 28, 29)**

David did not doubt Jehovah's word of promise. If David had understood these promises to be unconditional, there would have been no reason for him to pray that Jehovah fulfill them. He was praying Jehovah to fulfill his promises in spite of minor imperfections which every man possesses. Jeremiah records the principles on which Jehovah deals with nations and kingdoms: "Then the word of Jehovah came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith Jehovah. Behold, as the clay in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy it; if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if they do that which is evil in my sight, that they obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them." (Jer. 18:5-10.) The eleventh verse shows that these words had immediate reference to Judah; and Judah was the kingdom over which the seed of David ruled.

**SOME REFLECTIONS**

Some of that which Jehovah commanded Nathan to tell David, and which he did tell David, is recorded in verses 12 and 13 of the chapter from which our lesson is taken. It seems plain that the promises of these verses could not have been fulfilled in Solomon, or in the kings that succeeded him. The seed mentioned was to be set up as king while David slept with his fathers; but Solomon was made king while David was still alive. (1 Kings 1.) Jesus Christ is pre-eminent as the seed, or the Son, of David. Notice these expressions: "I will establish his kingdom," "I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever." Of whom but the Lord Jesus Christ could these things be true? In a prophecy concerning the blessings that would come through the Messiah, Isaiah has this to say: "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live: and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." (Read Isa. 55:1-5.) The sure mercies of David are the blessings that would come through the seed of David. Paul makes that plain in his sermon in the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia. (Acts 13:13-40.) "And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers, that God hath fulfilled the same unto our children, in that he raised up Jesus .... And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he hath spoken on this wise, I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David .... Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins." (Verses 32-38.) This shows that the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the sure mercies of David, all refer to the blessings in Christ, and are being fulfilled to us.

**TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION**

A study of the prophet Nathan.  
The throne of David.  
The sure mercies of David.

**QUESTIONS**

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

What did David mean by, "Thou hast brought me thus far"?

**Lesson Settings**

Give time, place, and persons.  
Where did David establish his residence, and what was that part of the city called?  
What is said of Hiram?  
Tell about the ark of God and what was done with it.

**Verses 22-24**  
Discuss verses 22-24.  
Repeat Psalm 33:12.

**Verses 25-27**

What does it take to make a real prayer?  
If God does not answer prayer, is praying to him any better than praying to an idol?  
Why could no one now know who is a descendant of David?

**Verse 17**

What did David plan to do?  
Discuss what Jehovah said to Nathan the prophet, verse by verse.

**Verses 28, 29**

**Verses 18-21**  
What frequently happens to men raised from a low state to a higher?  
What effect did it have on David?

What shows that the promises concerning the kingdom were conditional?  
Discuss Jer. 18:5-10.  
Discuss the reflections.

**MAP LINK**

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## FOURTH QUARTER

**LIGHT FROM CHRIST ON LIFE TODAY**

*AIM:—Through a study of principles revealed in the Bible to learn Christian ways of solving social problems.*

Lesson I—October 1, 1944

**JESUS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**

John 9:1-7, 13, 34-41

1 And as he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth.

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?

3 Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

4 We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

5 When I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed his eyes with the clay,

7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went away therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

33 They bring to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

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.

39 And Jesus said, For judgment came I into this world, that they that see not may see; and that they that see may become blind.

40 Those of the Pharisees who were with him heard these things, and said unto him, Are we also blind?

41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye would have no sin: but now ye say, We see: your sin remaineth.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"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.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Isa. 43:1-7.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

September 25. M

September 26. T

September 27. W

September 28. T

September 29. F

September 30. S

October 1. S

The Man Born Blind (John 9:1-7)

Spiritual Blindness (John 9:35-41)

Coming of the Light (Matt. 4:12-16)

Light in Darkness (John 1:1-5)

The Lord Our Light (Isa. 60:1-3, 19-21)

Let Your Light Shine (Matt. 5:14-16)

Walking in the Light (1 John 1:5-7)

**LESSON SETTINGS**

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 30.

*Place.*—Jerusalem.

*Persons.*—Jesus, a man born blind, and the Pharisees.



*Lesson Links.*—The world was in darkness when Jesus came. What light there was in the law of Moses had been obscured by formalism and the tradition of the elders. The world was lost in the darkness of sin. Jesus came that the world might find in him its way out of the darkness of sin. "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me may not abide in the darkness." (John 12:46.) Those who do not believe on him remain in darkness. Jesus calls men out of darkness into the light. (1 Pet. 2:9.) "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil." (John 3:19.) The only light we have from Christ comes to us through his gospel, and the gospel gives light only to those who learn it and love it. Thick darkness enshrouds those who reject the gospel light. We cannot have fellowship with Christ and his followers if we walk in darkness. "If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 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 1:6, 7.) "Come ye, and let us walk in the light of Jehovah." (Isa. 2:5.) People today are groping in darkness, longing for light, and know not where to find it. Jesus came into the world to give light to all men. (John 1:9.)

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### A Man Born Blind (Verses 1-3)

To those who saw the incident, it would seem that mere chance brought Jesus into contact with the blind man, the man born blind; but Jesus knew where the blind man was and what he himself would do. From verse eight we learn that the blind man was a beggar. The disciples asked this peculiar question: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?" They seemed to share the idea that all human sufferings came upon people because of their own sins or the sins of their parents. In many cases that is true, but a little thinking and observation will show that it cannot always be true. Suffering has been the common lot of humanity ever since Adam and Eve were driven away from the tree of life. One wonders how the disciples thought the man might have sinned before he was born so as to be born blind as a result of that sin. There was, and yet is, the doctrine of the transmigration of spirits—the notion that when a man dies his spirit enters into another person at birth, and that, if the former had sinned, afflictions as punishment were visited upon the latter. Their question does not prove that the disciples held to this doctrine, which was prominent in Egypt and India; perhaps they wanted to find out the truth of such matters. If that was not in their mind, they asked a loose and thoughtless question; for they certainly knew that an unborn child had not so sinned as to cause itself to be born blind. Jesus made no comment on the peculiarity of their question, but simply stated that this man's blindness had not been caused by his sins or the sins of his parents. All these various cures and healings proved the benevolence of the mission of Christ and the presence of God with him.

**Work While It Is Day (Verses 4, 5)**

"We must work the works of him that sent me." In this statement Jesus includes his disciples, even you and me. It is not enough that we work; a man may work so as to do a lot of harm. We must work the works of God, the works that God authorizes us to do. God had sent Jesus to accomplish certain works. Though Jesus did only that which was good, the Pharisees, who considered themselves the best people in the world, became his bitter enemies. The Pharisees, bound by the tradition of the elders, considered any effort to relieve human ailment on the Sabbath a great sin—a violation of the law of the Sabbath. Jesus gave no heed to the tradition of the elders, and frequently healed on the Sabbath. God had sent him to do a work, and he must do it while it was called day. Day here represents the life of a person; darkness represents death. The earth life of Jesus was rapidly nearing the end; before the end came he must finish the work which God had given him to do. This should remind us that we also must work as God has commanded; we have only a short life in which to do the work assigned us.

"I am the light of the world." This truth is repeated in many places in the Bible; John especially gives prominence to this truth. Light dispels darkness and enables one to walk without stumbling. In the darkness we stumble, and bump into things, and may fall into a ditch or pit. Our moral and spiritual life is like that. We cannot generate our own spiritual light. "O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. 10:23.) But people are slow to learn what Jeremiah knew. To those who have not the light of the gospel of Christ, or, having it, refuse to walk in it, life's way is dark, and the end even darker. The light of the gospel is focused on the narrow way; aside from that way all is darkness. But even so, our eyes are often so dimmed by ignorance, pride, prejudice, or other things that we do not see clearly when we attempt to walk in the light.

**Jesus Opens the Eyes of the Blind Man (Verses 6, 7)**

The clay that Jesus put on the eyes of the blind man had no power within itself to enable the blind man to see; and to tell a blind man to go to the pool of Siloam and wash may have seemed to the people that he was imposing on the blind. But it all served to attract attention, though the clay and the washing did not give sight to the blind man. The miracle was to be a sign that God was with Jesus; and the attention of the people had to be attracted, so they would know that a miracle had been wrought. Sight was to be given to the blind man, not merely for his sake, but that the works of God might be manifested before all. Anointing the eyes of the blind man with clay, and telling him to go and wash in Siloam, would start the people to talking, and focus attention on Jesus and the blind man. The purpose of it all must have been a mystery even to the blind man. If Jesus gave any hint as to why he anointed the eyes with clay, or why he told the man to go and wash in Siloam, the record does not tell us. The whole performance would be a mystery to all. It was a test of the man's willing to render, under difficulties, unquestioning obedience. To go and wash without any promise of results was a severe test; but obediently the blind man made his way to Siloam, washed, and came seeing. He who

had never seen anything now saw clearly. Such a miracle was bound to attract much attention.

### **The Once Blind Man Before the Pharisees (Verse 13)**

These Pharisees were the leaders in Jerusalem. The blind man's neighbors evidently thought the Pharisees should look into the matter, and so they brought the once blind man to them. "Now it was the sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes." When the Pharisees began to question the man about who opened his eyes, there developed a rather spirited argument between the Pharisees and the man. Because he had the facts and the truth on his side, he got the better of the argument. They maintained, that, because Jesus did this good on the Sabbath, he was a sinner—a sinner performing a work of mercy. Both the Pharisees and the man knew that Jesus was a Jew, and therefore a member of the covenant, and in no sense an alien. The once blind man did not speak by inspiration any more than did the Pharisees.

### **Jesus Reveals Himself as the Son of God (Verses 34-41)**

The Pharisees could not meet the arguments presented by the once blind man, but they could try to insult him. Will such a man as you try to teach such men as we are? They, like many today, would not receive teaching from anyone they considered of a lower class. They cast him out. When Jesus then found him, he asked the man, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" The man did not yet know that Jesus was the Son of God; and he would not have known, had Jesus not told him: "Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with thee." Seeing Jesus did not inform the man who Jesus was; and the miracle had only convinced him that Jesus was a prophet of God, else he could not have given sight to one born blind. But he could not, without testimony, believe on Jesus as the Son of God. When Jesus said to him in answer to his question as to who the Son of God was that he might believe, "He it is that speaketh with thee," he could then believe on Jesus as the Son of God—not before. Faith comes by hearing, and in no other way. (Rom. 10:14-17.) The Pharisees had blinded their eyes to the truth, and yet they claimed to see clearly that Jesus was a sinner—"we know that this man is a sinner." (Verse 24.) The man did not claim to see. Jesus enabled him to see both physically and spiritually. He opened his eyes to the truth by his words.

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

About the blindest people in the world when Jesus walked among men were the Pharisees—proud, self-righteous, haughty, dogmatic, domineering, they were the blindest of men. They could have seen the truth concerning Jesus, but they closed their eyes and boiled over with hate. Their sins remained with them.

God has always tested man's willingness to do his will. To be a test the thing commanded must be such that a man can see no reason in it. His respect for God must be such that a command is sufficient. He will do a thing because God commands it, and not because his own reason dictates it. Faith says, "Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth; command, and he will obey."

**TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION**

What was wrong with the Pharisees?  
 The things that blind people to the truth.  
 How religious customs now influence, and even control, people.  
 Examples wherein God tested men's willingness to obey him.

**QUESTIONS**

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

**Lesson Settings**

Give time, place, and persons.  
 Discuss the condition of the world when Jesus came.  
 Why did he come to earth?  
 How does light from Christ come to us?  
 Discuss I John 1:6, 7.

**Verses 1-3**

Tell about the blind man and the question the disciples asked.  
 What reply did Jesus make?

**Verses 4, 5**

Repeat verse 4.  
 How does it include us?  
 What are the works of God?  
 Repeat and discuss verse 5.

**Verses 6, 7**

Why would Jesus put clay on the eyes of the blind man?  
 What purpose did miracles serve?

**Verse 13**

Who were the Pharisees?  
 Who brought the man to the Pharisees, and why?  
 Why did they pronounce Jesus a sinner?

**Verses 34-41**

Tell about the controversy between the man and the Pharisees.  
 Repeat and discuss verse 34.  
 Repeat the conversation between Jesus and the man.  
 How was the man led to believe on the Son of God?  
 How does faith always come?  
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson II—October 8, 1944

**JESUS' PROGRAM FOR MEETING LIFE'S PROBLEMS**

Matt. 4:1-4; 6:31-34; Luke 4:16-21

1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.  
 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he afterward hungered.  
 3 And the tempter came and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.  
 4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.  
 31 Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?  
 32 For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.  
 33 But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.  
 34 Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.  
 16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read.  
 17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written,  
 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
 Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovering of sight to the blind, To set at liberty them that are bruised,  
 19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down: and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Heb. 2:10-18.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

October 2. M	Jesus Faces the Tempter (Matt. 4:1-4)
October 3. T	Jesus Announces His Life Program (Luke 4:16-21)
October 4. W	Jesus' Lifework Foretold (Isa. 53:1-12)
October 5. T	Jesus the Savior of the World (John 4:13-17)
October 6. F	The Seeking Savior (Luke 19:1-10)
October 7. S	The Call of Levi (Mark 2:13-17)
October 8. S	Jesus King of Kings (Rev. 19:11-16)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—For Matt. 4:1-4, A.D. 27; for 6:31-34, probably A.D. 29; for Luke 4:16-21, about A.D. 28.

*Places.*—An undesignated place in the wilderness, the temple in Jerusalem, a high mountain, a mountain in Galilee, and Nazareth of Galilee.

*Persons.*—Jesus, the devil, the disciples, and the people of Galilee.

*Lesson Links.*—The heading to a lesson is of minor importance; the important thing is the contents of the printed text. Both the example and the teaching of Jesus show us the true way of life, and both emphasize strict obedience to all the commands of God. Jesus himself set the example. "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." (John 8:29.) If we do as he did, we will live a life full of obedience to God and helpfulness to our fellow creatures.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### Jesus Fasts Forty Days and Forty Nights (Verses 1, 2)

Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan where John was baptizing, to be baptized of John. In so doing he showed the importance of baptism. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:13-17.) "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." It seems that this came immediately after his baptism. To tempt does not always mean to stir up in a person an inclination or a desire to do a thing, nor even that an effort is made to do so. God tempts people in the sense that he tries, or tests them; but he does not tempt people to do wrong. In that sense he tempts no one. (James 1:13.) Here are some definitions of tempt: To endeavor to persuade, incite; to lead, or endeavor to lead, into evil. To argue, as has been done, that, unless the thing offered stirs up a desire, or an inclination, there is no temptation, is really a reflection on the Lord. He was tempted; can anyone who reveres the Lord think for a moment that the devil stirred up any evil desires in the Savior's

heart? Evil desires, evil thoughts, are themselves sinful. The Lord's temptation is sometimes compared with the temptation of Eve in Eden. The nature of the appeal was much the same, but the likeness goes no farther. She lent a willing ear to what the devil said; Jesus met the devil's temptations with sharp rebuffs. At no time did the devil stir up any evil desires or impulses in our Lord's heart; for a desire to do an evil thing is wrong in itself. (Matt. 5:27.) At that particular time there were three temptations. Jesus was tempted at other times; for on the night of his betrayal he said to his disciples, "Ye are they that have continued with me in my temptation." (Luke 22:28.) None of them were with him in the three temptations of Matt. 4:1-11. During forty days and nights he ate nothing. It seems that the devil withdrew from him long enough for nature to reassert itself after the emotional strain of the forty days; he then became hungry.

### **The First of the Three Temptations (Verses 3, 4)**

Luke informs us that Jesus was being tempted of the devil during the forty days. It was perhaps the emotional strain of these temptations of the forty days that kept him from being hungry. As Matthew says the tempter then came to him, it indicates that he had departed for a season, a short time. No other feeling is so urgent as hunger or thirst. The devil struck Jesus at this point: "If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." The devil put in that "if," and yet he knew that Jesus was the Son of God—even the demons knew him to be the Son of God. He made it appear as if he did not know certainly who Jesus was. It was a challenge to Jesus to prove that he was the Son of God. Jesus did not propose to do anything the devil suggested; neither did he propose to prove anything to the devil. Jesus came to do the Father's will; and "It is written" meant more to him than something to satisfy his hunger. It is a dangerous thing to form the habit of going to evil men for advice. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked." (Psalm 1:1.) Instead of following the counsel of the devil, even though it would have relieved his hunger, he relied on t'ne counsel God had given through inspired men. There is more to life than eating food; food for the body, though essential, is not enough; we must live by every word of God. The spiritual man needs food no less than does the physical man. There is nothing else that the world needs today so much as it needs to live by the word of God. Too many professed Christians are starving for lack of spiritual food; their whole effort is directed toward supplying their physical needs. The devil did not fool Jesus, but he has fooled many Christians at this point. A Christian fulfills his social obligations when he really makes the word of God his guide in his daily living.

### **Seek First God's Kingdom and His Righteousness (Matt. 6:31-34)**

Jesus had admonished his disciples not to be anxious about food, drink, or clothing. Anxiety does not bring these things. The nations who knew not God, and who knew nothing about a higher spiritual life, were, and are, absorbed in efforts to provide for the needs and pleasures of the body. If our whole efforts are directed

toward providing these things, we live on a plane with the heathen. Many of the things for which people strive become a burden to them. Certainly we must work for a living, but we must not neglect our obligations to God and to our fellows. The kingdom of God and his righteousness should have first place in our lives. We must seek to enter that kingdom and then to make ourselves useful citizens of that kingdom. And we must seek God's righteousness—not his own personal righteousness, but the righteousness we have from him in the forgiveness of our sins. When a sinner obeys the gospel and is forgiven, there is then nothing against him; he is righteous. And the Lord's words show that entrance into his kingdom and obtaining his righteousness are conditional; we must seek them. This must be first and uppermost in all that we do. In doing this we will work to make an honest living and to be able to help the needy and worthy causes, for God requires us to do so. In all our efforts each day has its own problems, worries, and evils. If we add the anxieties for the morrow to the worries of today, each day then has the worries of two days. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." There are two kinds of evil—moral and physical. Each day has its physical evils, such as sickness, accidents, calamities; it is not helpful to borrow the evils of tomorrow.

### **Jesus in the Synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-21)**

Jesus was back in Nazareth where he grew to manhood. It was a Sabbath day, for the people had assembled for worship. Originally the word synagogue was applied to a congregation, or an organized group, of Jewish worshipers. In time the word came to be applied also to the house in which the worshipers met. It is used in both senses in the New Testament. It seems also that James applied it one time to a body of Christians assembled for worship. (James 2:2.) It was the custom of Jesus, as well as of all pious Jews, to attend these synagogue services. On this occasion Jesus was selected to read the lesson for the day. When he stood up to read, the attendant gave him the book, or scroll, of the prophet Isaiah. "He opened the book, and found the place where it was written." He could have quoted the passage without opening the book, but he set an example for all leaders by opening the book and reading. There were no chapters and verses in the Bible then, but the passage Jesus read is now identified as Isa. 61:1, 2. Having the Spirit without measure, and being God manifest in the flesh, Jesus could give the right application and interpretation of all prophecies. Jesus had been anointed to preach good tidings to the poor—to those who are poor in spirit and who tremble at the word of God. (Isa. 66:1, 2.) "To proclaim release to the captives"—release for those in captivity to the devil. Paul speaks of sinners as in the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him. (2 Tim. 2:26.) Sinners are in bondage to sin. (John 8:34.) Jesus came to release people from this captivity—this bondage to sin. The good tidings is preached to these captives, and through the power of this gospel people are released from this captivity. Through the ministry of Jesus many had their physical eyes opened; but many more were to have the eyes of their understanding opened by the power of these good tidings. "I, Jehovah, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the

people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." (Isa. 42:6, 7.) People have been terribly bruised by the buffetings of Satan and ruinousness of sin; but in Christ we find refuge and healing. "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." (Isa. 53:4, 5.) He alone can heal hearts that are bruised by sin or by grief and sorrow. And that help and healing of the bruises caused by sin come to us through the gospel of Christ. "The acceptable year of the Lord." Jehovah had been working out his own plans during the centuries, everything pointing to the time of the fulfillment of all the promises, types, and prophecies. That time had come. At another time Jesus said, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." In the parable in which "the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, who made a marriage feast for his son," the statement is made that "all things are ready." And to make it certain that nothing had failed in God's plans, Jesus said on the night of his betrayal, as he prayed to his Father in heaven, "I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do."

Having finished the reading, Jesus closed the book—rolled up the scroll, and gave it back to the attendant, the one who did the service about the synagogue. "And sat down." It seems that the Custom of the synagogue was, that the leader for the day stood up to read, and sat down to teach. His old neighbors, from whom he had been separated but a short time, were present, and likely his own immediate family were present. There must have been something about his appearance that attracted attention. "The eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." Uninspired men are not reliable interpreters of prophecy. It was not an accident that the prophecies concerning the Messiah and his kingdom were so written that uninspired men could not so weave them together as to stage a bogus fulfillment of them. The learned Jews, the doctors of the law, could not make the prophecies concerning the Messiah fit one person. They thought the Christ and the prophet of whom Moses spoke were two persons. (John 1:19-22.) Any really pious and humble heart today will be admonished by the failure of these learned Jews. But Jesus knew the prophecies and their fulfillment. But these leaders in Nazareth did not believe Jesus knew what he was talking about. What he said did not fit into their scheme of things, and they sought to kill him.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

To give proof to a person who will make bad use of it is like casting pearls before swine—it is likely that it will only enrage them.

If a man's heart is centered on earthly treasures or pleasures, and these are lost, as they frequently are, he has nothing left on which to rely for comfort. Many such have become mentally unbalanced, and some have taken their own lives.

Class prejudice is mean and contemptible wherever found; it is



also injurious to society as a whole. The employer who contemptuously refuses any suggestion from those who work for him injures both his business and his helpers. Society does not propose to listen to one who belongs to what it considers a lower strata of society—how foolish! Religious prejudice and self-righteousness is even worse. The leaders in Nazareth had both sorts of prejudice they did not want their nations antagonized, especially by one they knew as a carpenter.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The power of the written word of God.  
How to seek God's kingdom and his righteousness.  
How Jesus fulfilled the prophecy he read at Nazareth.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
What did the example and teaching of Jesus show us?  
Quote John 8:29.

#### Verses 1, 2

What is said about the baptism of Jesus?  
Discuss temptation.  
In what sense was Jesus tempted?

#### Verses 3, 4

What does Luke say about the temptation during the forty days?  
Discuss verses 3, 4.

#### Matt. 6:31-34

Discuss these verses.

#### Luke 4:16-21

Discuss the events of this Sabbath in Nazareth.  
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson III—October 15, 1944

### JESUS' UNDERSTANDING OF MAN

Matt. 12:9-21

- 9 And he departed thence, and went into their synagogue:  
10 And behold, a man having a withered hand. And they asked him, saying, is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? that they might accuse him.  
11 And he said unto them, What man shall there be of you, that shall have one sheep, and if this fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?  
12 How much then is a man of more value than a sheep! Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day.  
13 Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth: and it was restored whole, as the other.  
14 But the Pharisees went out, and took counsel against him, how they might destroy him.  
15 And Jesus perceiving it withdrew from thence: and many followed him; and he healed them all,  
16 And charged them that they should not make him known:  
17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying,  
18 Behold, my servant whom I have chosen;  
My beloved in whom my soul is well pleased:  
I will put my Spirit upon him,  
And he shall declare judgment to the Gentiles.  
19 He shall not strive, nor cry aloud;  
Neither shall any one hear his voice in the streets.  
20 A bruised reed shall he not break,  
And smoking flax shall he not quench,  
Till he send forth judgment unto victory.  
21 And in his name shall the Gentiles hope.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"He needed not that any one should bear witness concerning man; for he himself knew what was in man." (John 2:25.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Psalm 8.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

October 9.	M	Healing the Withered Hand (Matt. 12:9-14)
October 10.	T	Prophecy Fulfilled in Jesus (Matt. 12:15-71)
October 11.	W	Divine Insight (Heb. 4:12, 13)
October 12.	T	Jesus Heads Human Hearts (Mark 2:6-11)
October 13.	F	The Way to Greatness (Luke 9:46-48)
October 14.	S	Jesus Knows the Future (Luke 22:10-13)
October 15.	S	The Mighty Works of Jesus (Luke 6:17, 18)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 29—the second year of the ministry of Jesus.

*Place.*—Galilee, probably the city of Capernaum.

*Persons.*—Jesus, a man with a withered hand, some Pharisees.

*Lesson Links.*—Jesus, and also the inspired men sent to preach the gospel, performed many miracles. There was a purpose beyond the mere relief of suffering. On account of the confusion in the thinking of so many concerning these miracles, it is well to keep in mind some fundamental facts. And in studying this matter the American Standard Version is helpful, more so than the Common Version. It keeps up the distinction found in the Greek New Testament in the use of the words miracles and signs. When a miracle was wrought in connection with delivering a message by one sent of God, it is called a sign, a sign that God was with the preacher. Nicodemus had the right idea. Said he to Jesus, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." (John 3:2.) The miracle wrought in connection with Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal was a sign that Elijah was God's true prophet, and that Jehovah was the true God. (1 Kings 18:20-40.) John gives light on the purpose of these sign miracles: "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name." (John 20:30, 31.) The gospel preached by the apostles was confirmed by signs. (Mark 16:19, 20; Heb. 2:3, 4.) But many great miracles were not signs. The miracles of the creation were not signs; neither will the resurrection of the dead and the end of the world be signs. Signs have ceased; there will yet be miracles.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### The Pharisees Seek Occasion Against Jesus (Verses 9, 10)

It seems that the Pharisees were not pleased with anything Jesus did. Their antagonism to him had been growing ever since early in his ministry; their antagonism soon grew into bitter enmity. They spied on him constantly to see if they could find some grounds for action against him. When Jesus went into the synagogue to attend its services, the Pharisees were there, not as worshipers, but as spies. They were there to spy on Jesus. It was the Sabbath. And a man having a withered hand was there. Perhaps he was there,

and in a prominent place, at the solicitation of these same Pharisees. They knew that Jesus was in the habit of healing people of their afflictions. And so they asked Jesus, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? that they might accuse him." They knew that their tradition, which they regarded as the highest law, made it unlawful to heal on the Sabbath. They were not interested in helping the man with the withered hand; evil toward Jesus was uppermost in their hearts. It is plain that they wanted Jesus to heal the man, not for the man's sake, but that they might accuse him of violating their law of the Sabbath. Healing on the Sabbath was not a violation of the law of Moses; Jesus paid no attention to the tradition of the elders.

### **The Inconsistency of the Pharisees (Verses 11, 12)**

These Pharisees would see after the needs of their stock on the Sabbath. They would not let an animal suffer of thirst on the Sabbath; they would lead him to water. (Luke 13:10-16.) Yet they made it unlawful to relieve human suffering on the Sabbath. Because of this inconsistency, Jesus called them hypocrites. And if a sheep fell into a pit on a Sabbath day, they would not let it remain there until the Sabbath was past, but would lift it out; yet they decreed that a man, who was of much more value than a sheep, must bear his suffering or inconvenience until the Sabbath was past. But by doing good to animals, they acknowledged that it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath day. There is something radically wrong with a man's religion when it prevents him from doing good or showing mercy at any time. "Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day," to do good even to people. Surely they would not argue that a sheep was of more value than a man.

### **The Withered Hand Made Whole (Verse 13)**

It is interesting to note how Jesus showed the folly of the theory against healing on the Sabbath, and also how he made it impossible for them to say that he had healed on the Sabbath. He violated neither the law of Moses nor the tradition of the elders; he simply said to the man, "Stretch forth thy hand." They could find no prohibition against telling a man to stretch forth his hand; and yet in so far as they could discern that was all Jesus did. The man stretched forth his hand; "and it was restored whole, as the other." Jesus did not touch him; neither did he say, "Be thou made whole." In no court could they have proved that Jesus performed the healing of the withered hand. They could not so much as frame a charge against him. They had carefully laid their plans; and now to be so completely outtalked and outmaneuvered by one who had never been in their great schools was a blow to the Pharisee pride, especially as it all occurred before all the synagogue attendants.

### **Their Failure Infuriated the Pharisees (Verse 14)**

Religious fanatics are both wise and righteous in their own eyes; they therefore think anyone who opposes them is wicked and foolish. Opposition vexes them; and to be defeated in their own plans, and that before a congregation of people, infuriates them. Witness the conduct of the Pharisees on this and other occasions. They had been badly worsted before the people in the synagogue,

and they had brought it on themselves; had they said nothing, they would have escaped the humiliation. They talked themselves into a position where they could say nothing. They did not dare to plan anything against Jesus in the presence of Jesus and the people; so they "went out, and took counsel against him, how they might destroy him." Evil deeds are usually planned in secret. In concluding his report of this miracle, Mark says, "And the Pharisees went out, and straightway with the Herodians took counsel against him, how they might destroy him. (Mark 3:1-6.) And yet there was no love between the Pharisees and the Herodians, but they could join together to do evil.

### **Jesus Withdrew from Thence (Verses 15, 16)**

It may have been that more of the synagogue crowd were favorable to the Pharisees than even the Pharisees knew. However that might have been, Jesus was not minded to give the Pharisees excuse to do worse than they had done. Besides, he could do nothing for these blind guides. There was no need for stirring up greater turmoil when no good could come of it; so he departed to other parts, "and many followed him." If there were any others in the synagogue who had ailments they would certainly follow him. "And he healed them." In Mark's record we have a vivid picture of these events, in which great multitudes followed him, even from as far away as Tyre and Sidon. "And he spake to his disciples, that a little boat should wait on him, because of the crowd, lest they should throng him: for he had healed many; insomuch that as many as had plagues pressed upon him that they might touch him." Even unclean spirits "fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God." (See Mark 3:7-12.) "And he charged them much that they should not make him known." The Pharisees were jealous of their standing and influence; for that reason, the more the fame of Jesus spread, the greater would become their antagonism to him. But few of the miracles Jesus performed were singled out for specific mention. (John 20:30, 31.)

### **Prophecy Fulfilled (Verses 17-21)**

When an inspired writer tells us that a certain event or person fulfilled a certain prophecy, we can rely on that. The prophecy quoted from Isa. 42:1-4 has to do with the spirit and manner of Christ's preaching, and the scope of his mission; but Matthew gives a rather free translation of what Isaiah said, giving the spirit of it instead of the actual words, Jehovah refers to Jesus as "my servant," "my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth." At the baptism of Jesus a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And on the mount of the transfiguration: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (Matt. 3:17; 17:5.) Jesus himself said, "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." (John 8:29.) "And he shall declare judgment to the Gentiles." This does not refer to the judgment at the last day. Jesus sent the gospel to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews; and the gospel judged all men to be sinners. Paul raises the question, Are Jews better than Gentiles? and answers by saying, "No, in no wise: for we before laid to the charge both of Jews and Greeks, that they

are all under sin." (Rom. 3:9.) Jesus would not be a noisy, blundering fanatic. By his preaching he would raise no disturbances in the streets. He would not be a noisy man; he would not cry aloud. "Neither shall any one hear his voice in the streets." He would not resort to the tricks of the agitator. He would teach, and depend on the force of the truth he taught to attract people and to reform them. "A bruised reed shall he not break." The reed is a hollow cylinder between joints, and is therefore very weak when bruised; it might of its own weight buckle at the bruised place, or else be pushed over by a small pressure. Here it is the symbol of the person who has been bruised by sorrows, disasters, disappointments, and sin, to almost the breaking point. Jesus will not crush such down lower, but will lift them up and inspire them with a new hope, and also a new outlook on life. And think of the thousands of physical wrecks Jesus made whole, and these were but forerunners of the spiritual wrecks he has been salvaging by the gospel all down the ages. "And smoking flax shall he not quench." The old-time lamp was a crude affair. At least many of the ancient oil lamps were open at the top; a flaxen wick was used. When the oil was about consumed, the flame weakened, and the wick began to smoke. Is not that a striking symbol of the person who feels that there is no future for him? Many that Jesus healed of various ailments had reached that point. The "woman, who had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse," must have lost all hope, until she heard of Jesus. (Mark 5:25-34.) But that was a physical ailment. But multiplied thousands in sin, without hope and without God in the world, have been freed from the bondage and darkness of sin. Jesus deals gently with those who feel their need of him. The conversion of every sinner is a victory over Satan, and so also is the overcoming of every temptation. "And in his name shall the Gentiles hope." It is singular that the Jews could not see that their own prophets taught that the Messiah would be for the Gentiles as much as for the Jews; it is even more strange that some professed Christians even now hold the same ideas as did the Jews, for we now have the additional light of the New Testament. As respects the blessings of the Messiah, there is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile. (Acts 15:7-9; Rom. 10:11-13; Gal. 3:26-29.)

### SOME REFLECTIONS

The mission of Christ was, and is, a mission of mercy and good will. He came to help those who needed and wanted help. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37.) But the proud and haughty, those who do not feel their need of him, will not come to him that they may have life. They feel sufficient within themselves; the Pharisees were of that type. Jesus spoke a "parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and set all others at nought." (Luke 18:9.) "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit." (Isa. 66:2.) And that is true whether he be Jew or Gentile.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Miracles and signs.  
The compassion and mercy of Jesus.

Acts 10:34, 35; 15:7-9; Rom. 10:12, 13.

The difference in the attitude of Jesus toward the lowly and the proud Pharisees.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

Why are some miracles called signs?

Have miracles ceased?

#### Verses 9, 10

Discuss the attitude of the Pharisees toward Jesus.

Why did they think it unlawful to heal on the Sabbath?

#### Verses 11, 12

How did Jesus show the inconsistency of the Pharisees?

What conclusion did Jesus draw from their

practice?

#### Verse 13

How did Jesus manage to head them off from framing any charge against them?

#### Verse 14

What did the Pharisees then do, and what help did they call?

#### Verses 15, 16

What did Jesus then do?

Discuss Mark's report of this.

#### Verses 17-21

Discuss verses 17-21, verse by verse.

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IV—October 22, 1944

### RELIGION IN EDUCATION

Matt. 7:7-12; Luke 6:39-45

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

9 Or what man is there of you, who, if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone;

10 Or if he shall ask for a fish, will give him a serpent?

11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

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

39 And he spake also a parable unto them, Can the blind guide the blind? shall they not both fall into a pit?

40 The disciple is not above his teacher: but every one when he is perfected shall be as his teacher.

41 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

42 Or how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me cast out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

43 For there is no good tree that bringeth forth corrupt fruit; nor again a corrupt tree that bringeth forth good fruit.

44 For each tree is known by its own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

45 The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Prov. 3:13-26.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—*

October 16.	M	The Beatitudes (Matt. 5:1-12)
October 17.	T	The Blind Leading the Blind (Luke 6:39-45)
October 18.	W	Education in the Law (Deut. 6:4-12)
October 19.	T	Ezra Teaches God's Law (Neh. 8:1-3, 8-10)
October 20.	F	Paul's Training (Gal. 1:11-24)
October 21.	S	Delight in God's Law (Psalm 119:97-104)
October 22.	S	Timothy's Training (2 Tim. 2:15; 3:14-17)

**LESSON SETTINGS**

*Time.*—A.D. 23 or 29.

*Places.*—A mountain, also a level place, in Galilee.

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

*Lesson Links.*—The word "religion" applies to many cults, beliefs, and systems. There are more kinds of religion than anyone knows. What is, in common parlance, known as the Christian religion is, in reality, a number of different religions, corruptions of the religion of Christ. The pure religion taught in the New Testament is the only religion worthy of a place in any system of education. There is in man capacity for moral and spiritual development, as well as for intellectual growth. No system of education is complete if it neglects any of these powers. The religion of Christ, the religion taught in the New Testament, is the basis for the proper development of the moral and spiritual powers of man; no one is really educated who has not gained a knowledge of the Bible and has not imbibed the spirit of its teaching. Training in the proper use of the knowledge acquired is an important part of education. Simply cramming with knowledge is not education. Another important part of education is to learn how to treat one's fellows. If a man does not know this, he is not really educated, no matter how many degrees he has. And if he does not know his dependence on God, and if he does not have any feeling of responsibility to God, he does not know how to fill his place in life. And he should know how to care for his own body. "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." (Titus 2:11, 12.) These words outline the whole course of right living—"denying ungodliness and worldly lusts," turning away from irreverence and fleshly indulgences; "live soberly," take proper care of your body; "righteously," deal justly with your fellow man; "godly," be respectful and obedient to God.

**COMMENTS ON THE LESSON****Ask—Seek—Knock—Receive (Verses 7, 8)**

People ask for what they desire, and they seek for that which they regard as of value to them, and they knock for admittance. All these words refer to prayer. Knock, of course, is used in a figurative sense. The statement that every one will receive what he asks for is limited to acceptable prayer. There are certain necessary elements in acceptable prayer. There must be obedience. (Prov. 1:24-31; 28:9.) There must be faith in God's ability and willingness to hear and answer prayer. (James 1:5-7.) Prayer must be according to the will of God. (1 John 5:14.) There must be a forgiving spirit. (Matt. 6:14, 15.) So long as a man does not feel

his need and his dependence on God, he will not pray. But even some professed Christians have so limited God with their theories about the laws of nature and miracles, that God means very little to them as a Father. Their theories make God more helpless than his creatures.

### **God's Goodness Set Forth by Comparison (Verses 9-11)**

If you doubt God's willingness to answer prayer, think of the attitude of an earthly father toward his children. He does not turn a deaf ear to the call of his child. He is not so bound by the laws of nature that he cannot answer his child. Has he more willingness and freedom of action than his creator? If a child trustingly asks his father for a good thing, the father will not give him a worthless thing. If the child asks for bread, the father will not give him a stone, nor refuse to give him anything. If children were to talk like some professed Christians, they would say something like this: "Pa and ma can't give us anything we ask for without working a miracle, for the laws of nature are fixed; so why ask them for anything?" But children are not so foolish as that; they ask for what they want, and let the parents worry about the answer. Now read again verse 11.

### **The Golden Rule (Verse 12)**

The statement in verse 12 has been aptly termed the Golden Rule, though the Bible does not so name it. All good principles, as well as all other good things, may be abused. It would certainly be abusing the rule, if a judge or a juror should say to himself concerning a criminal before the court, "If I were in his place and he in mine, I would want him to free me; so will I do to him." No good principle should be so twisted as to make it support any evil. But the application of the rule, guided by reason and justice, will keep a man from doing any harm or injustice to anyone; and it will do more—it will cause a man to do what he can to help those who are in need. There is no place in the doctrine of Christ for the theory that might makes right. No one should say, "I am not responsible for the man's hard luck; why should I help him?" The priest and the Levite seem to have gone on that theory when they refused to help the wounded man; but the Samaritan, though he may have never heard of the Golden Rule, practiced its precept. (Luke 10:30-37.) "Go, and do thou likewise."

### **Blind Guides—the Disciple and His Teacher (Luke 6:39, 40)**

The blind cannot be a safe leader, whether the blindness be physical, or intellectual, or moral, or spiritual. It is almost certain that no one but a blind man would allow a blind man to lead him, and he would not, if he knew the proposed leader was blind. People are blind spiritually because they close their eyes against the truth of Christ. (Matt. 13:15.) The leaders of the Jews flattered themselves that they were the only true guides in the world, but they were blind guides. When the disciples complained to Jesus that the Pharisees did not like what he had said to them, Jesus replied, "Let them alone: they are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit." (Matt. 15:12-14.) It was a warning to the disciples to let these blind guides alone. Later, in severely rebuking the Pharisees, Jesus used such terms as these: "Ye blind



guides," "Ye fools and blind." (Read Matt. 23:13-36.) And yet practically the whole Jewish people looked to the Pharisees for religious guidance, and that was a case of the blind leading the blind. If the people were not blind, the blind leaders would be without any following. And today the world is full of blind leaders, and each has a group of blind followers. And as it was with the Pharisees, so it is today, the blind leaders think they are the only people that can see clearly.

A disciple is a learner, a pupil; he is a follower of one whom he has selected as his guide in philosophy or religion. Jesus makes a statement that applies to all teachers and pupils no matter what is being taught. No one would follow any teacher if he thought he knew more than the teacher. If a pupil reached the point where he knew as much as his teacher, the teacher would pronounce him perfect; he would be as his teacher. But the one who puts himself under Christ as his teacher will not reach the point where he knows as much as Christ; he will not reach absolute perfection in this life. If he does the best he can, his efforts are perfect; and that is all anyone can do.

### **The Mote and the Beam (Verses 41, 42)**

No one could really have a beam in his eye; but Jesus uses an exaggerated figure of speech to illustrate a common fault, namely, to criticize minor faults in others while the critic is himself guilty of greater faults. In our estimate of the conduct of others, we so often fail to consider our own faults. We busy ourselves in trying to correct others when we ourselves stand in greater need of correction. Of course this is not always true; nor did Jesus mean to discourage all efforts to correct others. The remarks of Jesus were aimed mainly at the Pharisees, who considered themselves righteous and all others as unworthy of notice. They saw many faults in others, but none in themselves. That is illustrated in the speech of the Pharisee whom Jesus mentions in Luke 18:9-14. It was right for them to pay tithes even on their garden vegetables; but they "left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith." (Matt. 23:23.) They neglected these weightier matters of the law, but were very strict in observing the small things of their traditions, and criticized others for not doing so. (Mark 7:1-8.) It is right to rebuke those who do wrong, and to seek to correct them. (2 Tim. 4:1, 2.) But the critic should first consider and correct his own faults. (Acts 20:28-31; Gal. 6:1.) If a man seeks to correct others, but makes no effort to do right himself, he is a hypocrite. "Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye." But some people find pleasure in criticizing others, but find it rather painful to eliminate their own faults. It pains a fellow less to get a mote out of the other fellow's eye than to get a beam out of his own eye!

### **The Tree and Its Fruit (Verses 43-45)**

In his parables and illustrations Jesus used things and incidents with which the people were familiar. Palestine was a country of figs and grapes. All his hearers knew that the nature of the tree determined the nature of the fruit it bears; but even so, they knew

also that some faulty fruit would appear on the best of fruit trees or vines. A good tree is not to be condemned because one finds some fault or worm-eaten fruit on it. On account of the abundance of the good apples on a tree we pay no attention to the few faulty ones that appear. But a sweet apple tree does not bear sour apples, nor does it bear lemons. "For each tree is known by its own fruit." And no one condemns a whole orchard because it has in it one worthless tree; but some men will condemn a whole church because they have had dealings with a crooked member. They do not see the good, but only the bad; or else they merely use that as an excuse for their disobedience to God. If a man's heart is good, it will produce good results in a man's life, no matter what others do, or fail to do. A good and honest heart receives the word of God, and brings forth fruit in the life. (Luke 8:15.) It is the body with its members that perform good deeds, but it is the heart that controls the actions of the body. "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh." "For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man." (Mark 7:21-23.) We all live out in our lives the thoughts and purposes of the heart; it is the power, or the dynamo that generates the power, that sets the machinery of the body in action.

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

Crime is on the increase in this country, due to a serious defect in the training of the young from childhood to maturity. There can be no enduring morality without a feeling of personal responsibility to God. Here many parents fail; they do not impress this upon their children, and they fail to teach their children that the only way to learn about God and our duties to him is to study the Bible. Even when they do this, the child is likely to fall under the teaching of some teacher at school who hoots at such ideas as old-fashioned. He is frequently taught that God did not create us, but that we came up from the lowest conceivable form of life through a process of evolution through various forms of animal life. He can then easily conclude, that, as we are all just an improved group of animals, there is no foundation for a moral life, nor any reason for such a life. If a man believes that we are all the offspring of God, then he has a basis and a reason for a clean moral life. And if the Bible is not from God, then we have no guide but our own fallacious reasoning. See what that idea has done for certain nations in recent years, and is yet doing for these nations.

### **TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION**

What is real education?  
Some hurtful theories in present-day education.  
The kind of education that lessens crime.

## QUESTIONS

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

**Lesson Settings**

Give time, places, and persons.  
Why cannot there be different kinds of Christianity?  
What is real education?  
Quote and discuss Tit. 2:11, 12.

**Verses 7, 8**

Tell what it takes to constitute acceptable prayer.

**Verses 9-11**

Discuss the illustration Jesus uses.

**Verse 12**

Repeat and discuss verse 12.

**Luke 6:39, 40**

Repeat what is said about the blind.

What was Jesus illustrating?  
What did he say of the Pharisees?  
Why does anyone suffer a blind man to lead him?  
Discuss what is said about the disciple and his teacher.

**Verses 41, 42**

What is said about the mote and the beam?  
Why and when is it right to seek to correct others?

**Verses 43-45**

What is said about the tree and its fruit?  
Discuss the lesson this illustration teaches.  
What about man is responsible for his deeds?  
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson V—October 29, 1944

**THE CHRISTIAN MOTIVE FOR LIVING**

Psalm 4:5-8; Luke 4:4; John 6:35; Rom. 12:1, 2; 13:12-14

- 5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,  
And put your trust in Jehovah.  
6 Many there are that say, Who will show us any good?  
Jehovah, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.  
7 Thou hast put gladness in my heart,  
More than they have when their grain and their new wine are increased.  
8 In peace will I both lay me down and sleep;  
For thou, Jehovah, alone makest me dwell in safety.  
4 And Jesus answered unto him, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone.  
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.  
1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service.  
2 And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.  
12 The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.  
13 Let us walk becomingly, as in the day; not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy.  
14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Seek the things that are above." (Col. 3:1.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Deut. 8:1-10.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

October 23. M  
October 24. T  
October 25. W

Living by God's Word (Deut. 8:1-3)  
The True Bread of Life (John 6:26-35)  
The Transformed Life (Rom. 12:1, 2)

October 26.	T	The Armor of Light (Rom. 13:12-14)
October 27.	F	Walking in Love (Eph. 5:1, 2, 14-20)
October 28.	S	Christ Our Life (Col. 3:1-15)
October 29.	S	The Crucified Life (Gal. 2:15-20)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Psalm 4:5-8 was probably written after David was anointed king over all Israel. This anointing occurred, according to Usher, 1048 B.C.; according to Hales, 1064 B.C.; for Luke 4:4, probably A.D. 27; for John 6:35, A.D. 28; the Roman letter was written about A.D. 58.

*Places.*—Probably Jerusalem, the wilderness of Judaea, Capernaum, Corinth.

*Persons.*—David, Jesus, the multitude, Paul, and the Roman brethren.

*Lesson Links.*—All sane actions are prompted by motive; that is, sane people in their deliberate actions are moved by motive. Too many people are moved by impulse, rather than by motive. If a man becomes a member of the church by impulse, he is not likely to stay with it. But the word "motive," as strange as it may seem, is not in the American Standard Version. Webster gives this definition of motive: "That within the individual, rather than without, which incites him to action; any idea, need, emotion, or organic state that prompts to action." The fear of displeasing God, the desire to bring our lives into harmony with his will, the desire for salvation from sin, the longing to be like Christ in holiness of living and to be with him in the world to come—these are some of the powerful motives that prompt people to refrain from sins and transgressions, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, and even to suffer for the name of Christ.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### An Exhortation and a Prayer (Verses 5, 6)

David was not a Christian, for a Christian is a follower of Christ; but David was a devoted servant of Jehovah, and some of the sentiments he expressed are as appropriate for the Christian as for David. "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness." This cannot mean that righteousness itself is the sacrifice to be offered; for David uses the plural, "sacrifices." A mere sacrifice is of no account with Jehovah, but righteousness is. The sacrifices of righteousness are sacrifices offered in righteousness. David prayed for the walls of Jerusalem to be built, and added, "Then wilt thou delight in the sacrifices of righteousness, in burnt-offering and whole burnt-offering." (Psalm 51:18, 19.) "And put your trust in Jehovah." "Trust in Jehovah, and do good .... Commit thy way unto Jehovah; trust also in him, and he will bring it to pass." (Psalm 37:3-5.) Paul expresses his confidence and trust in these words: "I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day." (2 Tim. 1:12.)

If the reader will look at verse 6 in his Bible, he will see that the word "any" is in italics, which means that it was not in the original, but was supplied by the translators; it really should not be there. Many people for various reasons become soured on life, and ask, "Who will show us good?"—who will show us happiness? They see no good in anything or in anybody. The next statement is the

answer: "Jehovah, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." There is good—there is happiness—in turning away from all evil associations and delighting ourselves in the law of Jehovah. (Psalm 1.) But the man who gives himself over to fleshly indulgences will reach the point where he becomes sour, and sees no good in anything in life, not even in his own life. "He that giveth heed unto the word shall find good; and whoso trusteth in Jehovah, happy is he." (Prov. 16:20.) Even afflictions may sometimes be good for us, even better than prosperity. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I may learn thy statutes. The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver." (Psalm 119:71, 72.)

### **Gladness and Peace (Verses 7, 8)**

There is nothing wrong in rejoicing when we have a rich harvest, for without food we can do nothing. There is nothing wrong in rejoicing over any good fortune. We are glad when things go well with us, but David had also a higher source of gladness, "More than they have when their grain and their new wine are increased." Evidently David's days of harassing flight from the murderous intentions of Saul were over; he could now lie down in peace to sleep. It is good for a man to have such trust and confidence in God that he can peacefully spend the necessary time in restful sleep. "For thou, Jehovah, alone makest me dwell in safety."

### **"Man Shall Not Live by Bread Alone" (Luke 4:4)**

It is said that real hunger and great thirst are the most intense passions that seize man's being. A normal man, about to starve, would give all he had for something to eat. When Jesus was suffering from hunger after his forty-day fast, the devil said to him, "If thou art the Son of God, command this stone that it become bread." By complying with the devil's suggestion, Jesus would be putting himself under the dictation of the devil, but he did not propose to be influenced by the devil in any way. He relied on what was written rather than on the suggestion of the devil. And so he answered, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone." Matthew's account is somewhat fuller: "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.) If man were a mere animal, he would need no other food than that which sustains animal life; he would need to care for only his body. But man's spiritual nature needs food; and the word of God is the food that sustains spiritual life. It is also our guide, the guide by which the child of God must live. If a man delights in the word of God, he will feed upon it. "And I will give you shepherds according to my heart, who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." (Jer. 3:15.) Meditating on the goodness and faithfulness of God is food to the soul. (Psalm 37:3.)

### **The Bread of Life (John 6:35)**

"Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life." By study, meditation, prayer, and obedience to what we learn, we feed upon him. It is the way we eat his flesh and drink his blood. "He that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." This does not mean that a Christian can feed on this bread

of life until he will want no more of the Lord, but that the one who feeds on the Lord will not hunger for other spiritual food. He will not want any other teacher or any other doctrine. The living waters will be so satisfying that he will want to drink at no other fountain; he will thirst for nothing else. In Jesus we find satisfaction for all our hungering and thirsting for the higher and better life. The devout Christian wants no other.

### **"Your Spiritual Service" (Rom. 12:1)**

Anyone can think of many ways in which God's mercy has been extended to us. We should show our gratitude by rendering to him willing obedience. Our bodies are the instruments by means of which we serve him. The Christian is therefore to present his body a living sacrifice—alive from death in sin and alive to all that God requires. "Holy"; that is, devoted to God. It is a term the Greeks used when a sacrifice was made in honor of a certain god—it was said to be devoted to that god. Our bodies are to be devoted to God in living, active service; it is our sacrifice, a thank offering for God's mercies to us. And though it be our bodies that are thus offered, devoted, to God, it is the highest sense a spiritual service. No command of God can be obeyed without using some part, or member, of the body in some way; but if the heart is in what is done, it is a spiritual service. God's appeal is to the inner man; the inner man responds to that appeal by using the body.

### **"Be Ye Transformed" (Rom. 12:2)**

It requires an effort to keep from falling into the habits and customs about us. We wear certain types of clothing because others do; within reason, that is all right. But in shaping our religious life, it is quite different, or should be. At the judgment we will not be judged by the religious customs that prevail about us. Here we are building our character—fashioning our lives—by some pattern. In his example and teaching Christ gives us the model by which to fashion our lives. Jesus tells us to follow him. We have been chosen out of the world; we should not therefore strive to be like the world, nor allow ourselves carelessly to follow worldly ways. "Be not fashioned according to this world," or, as in the marginal reading, "this age." "But be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." The mind is the source of our actions. A man lives out in his life the thoughts and purposes of his mind. If a man tries to transform his way of living without renewing his mind, he will meet with disappointing failure. One cannot live a different life on the same old stock of ideas. There must be some new thoughts and purposes, or there will be no new life. After speaking of the corruptions of the nations, Paul says, "But ye did not so learn Christ; if so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus; that ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, that waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit; and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth." (Eph. 4:20-24.) No one will put on the new man until he is renewed in the spirit of his mind. And Paul puts that responsibility on the individual. Many people have been disappointed and discouraged because they failed to carry out a good resolution—

they failed because they did not renew the mind. Renewing the mind goes before renewing the life. By this transformation of life we can "prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." If we live as we should, we prove to the world that the will of God is good and perfect. But this requires a transformed character; and on our part a transformation of character comes from careful thinking and determined purpose. David says, "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies." (Psalm 119:59.) And here is the way Paul puts it: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me." (Gal. 2:20.) Paul is an outstanding example of a completely transformed character.

### **"Let Us Walk Becomingly" (Rom. 13:12-14)**

Paul uses an expression that shows the time for action is short. And he speaks of light as an armor, because light is a protection to those who seek to live right. The word of God is light; put it on as an armor. This requires that we know what it teaches. To walk becomingly, as any Christian should walk, is to live a life of obedience to God—to refrain from indulging in immoral practices to gratify the lusts of the flesh, and to be clear of stirring up strife, or harboring jealousies. To walk becomingly requires a clean life, and a life free from stirring up trouble with others. "But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. This wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed." (James 3:14-16.) The Christian puts on Christ by adopting his teaching and following his example. We must provide for the needs of the flesh by honest labor, but not for the gratifying of its lusts.

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

Sometimes more stress is placed on doing something than on being something. A person may do many things, and yet not be what he should be; but if he is what he should be, he is most likely to do what he should do. The religion of Christ is intended to build character to make of men and women what they ought to be. "Be ye transformed." "Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind; be sober and set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as children of obedience, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in the time of your ignorance: but like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy." (1 Pet. 1:13-16.)

### **TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION**

- The transforming power of the gospel.
- The power of thoughts.
- The explosive power of an ideal.

## QUESTIONS

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

**John 6:35**

Discuss this verse.

**Lesson Settings**

Give time, places, and persons.  
Give some discussion of motive.

**Rom. 12:1**

In what sense may our bodies be living sacrifices and also holy?  
How can the use of the body be a spiritual service?

**Verses 5, 6**

Why was David not a Christian?  
Discuss verse 4.  
Why do some people think there is no good?  
What is good, and who find good?

**Rom. 12:2**

Repeat verse 2.  
Discuss what Paul says about "fashioned" and "transformed."

**Verses 7, 8**

Discuss these verses.

**Rom. 13:12-14**

What is the meaning of verse 12?  
What is it for a Christian to walk becomingly?  
From what is the Christian to refrain?  
Discuss James 3:14-16.  
Discuss the reflections.

**Luke 4:4**

Repeat Luke 4:4.  
What is the lesson of this verse?

Lesson VI—November 5, 1944

**THE CHRISTIAN AND THE RACE PROBLEM**

Acts 10:9-16, 34, 35; 17:24-28

9 Now on the morrow, as they were on their journey, and drew nigh into the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour;

10 And he became hungry, and desired to eat: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance;

11 And he beholdeth the heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth:

12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts and creeping things of the earth and birds of the heaven.

13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat.

14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean.

15 And a voice came unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common.

16 And this was done thrice: and straightway the vessel was received up into heaven.

34 And Peter opened his mouth, and said,

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

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

24 The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

25 Neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

26 And he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation;

27 That they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us:

28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said,

For we are also his offspring.

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



*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Psalm 100.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

October 30. M	Peter's Vision (Acts 10:9-16)
October 31. T	Made of One Blood (Acts 17:24-28)
November 1. W	Peter and Cornelius (Acts 11:5-15)
November 2. T	A Cosmopolitan Church (Acts 11:19-21; 13:1)
November 3. F	Philip in Samaria (Acts 8:4-8)
November 4. S	Philip and the Ethiopian (Acts 8:26-39)
November 5. S	Jesus in Samaria (John 4:5-9. 39-42)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—The dates are not certain. Probably A.D. 40 and 52.

*Places.*—Joppa, Caesarea, and Athens.

*Persons.*—Peter, Cornelius, and others; Paul and the people of Athens.

*Lesson Links.*—The early, church had a race problem. In that period in which the church began the Jews considered all non-Jews as unclean and unfit to associate with. This attitude toward others had been assumed by the Jews as a part of their religion. With them it was more than race exclusiveness; it was matter of religion with them, but they carried their exclusiveness much farther than the law of Moses required. At first the Christian Jews did not think the gospel was for any but Jews. Some professed Christians among the Jews taught that all Gentiles had to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, or they could not be saved. (Acts 15:1.) Even after the apostles at Jerusalem issued the decree that Gentile Christians should not be troubled, some kept up the contention. Paul labored extensively among the Gentiles, more so than any other apostle; for he was especially chosen as an apostle to the Gentiles. It seems that these Judaizing meddlers made a specialty of going to churches that Paul had planted, to try to get all Gentile Christians to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. They Were not church builders, but church disturbers. They were not interested in converting Gentile sinners to Christ; they were interested in converting Gentile Christians to the law of Moses and the tradition of the elders. They wanted to make the church a mere sect of the Jews. These Judaizers finally developed into an independent sect known as the Ebionites. They would have done far more damage to churches among the Gentiles, had it not been for the fight Paul made.

Some years passed after the church was set up before the gospel was preached to Gentiles; and yet on the day the church was set up Peter said to inquirers, "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." (Acts 2:39.) Those "afar off" were Gentiles, but even Peter then did not see how far-reaching his remark was.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### **Cornelius Instructed to Send for Peter (Verses 1-9)**

To gain an understanding of this lesson we must begin with verse I Of this chapter. It is singular that all the centurions mentioned in the New Testament appear in a favorable light. Of this man Cornelius it is said: "Now there was a certain man in Caesarea, Cornelius by name, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a

devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always." (Verses 1, 2.) Cornelius was therefore a believer in the one God, and prayed to him, and not to idols, a good man in all his walks. "He saw in a vision openly, as it were about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in unto him, and saying to him, Cornelius. And he, fastening his eyes upon him, and being affrighted, said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and fetch one Simon, who is surnamed Peter." Cornelius sent two of his servants and a devout soldier to Joppa to bring Peter. They reached Joppa the next day.

### **Peter's Vision (Verses 10-16)**

Of course Peter knew not that men were coming for him. God was directing affairs, and everything moved on time. As the men whom Cornelius had sent drew near the city Peter went up on the housetop to pray. It was about the noon hour, and Peter became hungry. While waiting for the noon meal to be prepared, Peter fell into a trance. He saw coming down out of the opened heavens what appeared to be a great sheet, "let down by four corners upon the earth: wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts and creeping things of the earth and birds of the heaven. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat." This came at a time when Peter was hungry; but he said, "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean." It does not seem that Peter meant to be rebellious; more likely he thought the Lord was testing him to see if he would go against his convictions. If so, he felt sure the Lord would be pleased with him, if he stood the test. But Peter did not at the time see the import of the vision. Verse 17 tells us that Peter was much perplexed as to what the vision might mean. Perhaps the most perplexing thing about it all was the Lord's statement: "What God hath cleansed, make not thou common." Even this became plain to him in the course of what followed. But the language quoted does not mean that Cornelius had been cleansed of his sins, as some seem to think; for when Peter arrived at the house of Cornelius, he said to the many who had assembled, "Ye yourselves know how it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to join himself or come unto one of another nation; and yet unto me hath God showed that I should not call any man common or unclean." All men were made clean in the same sense that Cornelius had been cleansed—the law that made such distinctions between Jew and Gentiles, and between different species of animals in the matter of using them for food, had been taken away. But to us it seems that the apostles would have learned from statements made by Jesus, such as the following, that the gospel was for all men without distinction as to races: "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matt. 21:43.) "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 28:19,) "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation." (Mark 16:15.) "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that re-

pentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem." (Luke 24:46, 47.) Ordinarily these statements would have been plain enough to anyone, but the apostles then were so blinded by Jewish exclusiveness that they did not see the full import of what Jesus said. It required a special vision and the report of the experience of Cornelius to overcome Peter's scruples against going to the Gentiles with the gospel.

### **Peter Preaches to Gentiles (Verses 34, 35)**

Of course Cornelius knew about this Jewish exclusiveness. On entering the house of Cornelius Peter referred to this, and added, "Unto me hath God showed that I should not call any man common or unclean: wherefore also I came without gainsaying, when I was sent for. I ask therefore with what intent ye sent for me." Cornelius told what had led him to send for Peter, and added, "Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord." Not many preachers have had the assurance before he began his sermon that all of those present were before him to hear what God commanded. Peter had been fully convinced that the gospel should be preached to Gentiles, that God is no respecter of persons. This means that the Jew has no advantage over Gentiles, and yet some hold to the theory that God will at some future time show special favors to the Jews. God has no special race of people; "but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him." He therefore does not accept the disobedient in any nation. If a man does not do right, he need not expect God to accept him. As God is no respecter of persons, no station in life can free any man from the necessity of obeying the gospel, and from living a righteous life. Do not flatter yourself that you are a special favorite of the Lord; nor should anyone try to convince any race of people that it is God's favorite race. Both Jew and Gentile have the same standing before God, and stand in need of the same remedy for sin, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **The Common Origin of All Nations of Men (Acts 17:24-28)**

Athens was a city of idols, and apparently the Greeks were the most highly cultured of all idolatrous peoples of the earth. When men from Thessalonica came down to Beroea to make trouble for Paul, he left Beroea and came down to Athens. While waiting there for Silas and Timothy, and having seen that the city was full of idols, "he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with them that met him." Here he encountered certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. "And they took hold of him, and brought him unto the Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new teaching is, which is spoken by thee." (Read verses 13-23.) These men did not want to know what to do to be saved; they merely wanted to add to their stock of information. They did not want anything going on in the world without their knowing about it. Paul's audience consisted for the most part of these philosophers and their disciples. These Athenians had erected one altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Paul took this as a starting point for his speech, and affirmed that this unknown

God was the one who "made the world and all things therein." In these verses Paul was presenting the real first principles of the gospel. A firm conviction that God is, and that he is the creator of all things, is the starting point for all obedience; "for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him." (Heb. 11:6.) Man depends on God for rewards, and also for his very existence; God is not dependent on man, "seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." The human family did not come from several original ancestors. God "made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth." Adam is the one from whom every nation and race of men descended. And Paul's language shows that the destiny of nations is in the hands of God. There is not space in this lesson to discuss how God controls the destinies of nations. Even if we cannot know fully how God controls the destinies of nations, it is still a fact that he does. To seek after God is to make a decided effort to know him. The Gentiles, who had no revelation, could only feel after him; that is, grope their way, as men in dense darkness have to feel their way. But that condition should have made them realize their need of the light of revelation. Jehovah is near those who are earnestly seeking to know him and to come to him; "for in him we live, and move, and have our being." We depend on him for life, for all life comes from him, even our very being. All motion is from him, for without him we would have neither being nor life. Then Paul quotes from one of their own poets a statement which shows that some of the Greeks taught that God was the origin of all things. The command to all men everywhere to repent shows that the gospel is for all men. (Verse 30.)

### SOME REFLECTIONS

In preaching the gospel and extending the kingdom of God, there should be no race problem—the gospel is for all men. When a church or an individual decides to have the gospel preached to those who have never heard it, it is sometimes a problem as to where to thrust in the sickle. But even that does not seem to be a problem to some. They think the language of Jesus in John 4:35 applies to all places that need the gospel: "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest." But the fact that a place needs the gospel is not proof that it is ready for a gospel harvest. A field is not white unto harvest when no one can be harvested. The Jews in Antioch of Pisidia needed the gospel as much as anybody, but Paul and Barnabas said to them: "Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." (Acts 13:46.) The Jews in that city were not ready to be harvested, and Paul gave them no further attention. What to do with them was not a problem to Paul and Barnabas.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Acts 11:1-18.  
Paul and the Jews in Antioch in Pisidia.  
Paul and the Judaizers.

### QUESTIONS

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

**Lesson Settings**  
Give time, places, and persons.

What race problem troubled the early church?

**Verses 1-9**

Tell about Cornelius, and how he came to send for Peter.

**Verses 10-16**

Tell about Peter's vision.

What lesson did Peter get from the vision?

What words of Jesus should have convinced the apostles that the gospel was to be preached to all peoples?

**Verses 34, 35**

Tell about Peter's sermon.

On what principle did Peter say God would accept men?

**Acts 17:24-28**

Tell how Paul began his work in Athens.

How came he to make the speech recorded in Acts 17?

Discuss the part of the speech included in our lesson.

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VII—November 12, 1944

**THE CHURCH DURING WAR AND PEACE**

Matt. 5:43-48; Rom. 13:1-7

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God.

2 Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment.

3 For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same:

4 For he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil.

5 Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, hut also for conscience' sake.

6 For this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing.

7 Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God." (Matt. 5:9.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Isa. 11:1-10.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

November 6. M

November 7. T

November 8. W

November 9. T

November 10. F

November 11. S

November 12. S

Love to Enemies (Matt. 5:43-46)

Subject to Higher Powers (Rom. 13:1-7)

Overcoming Evil (Rom. 12:17-21)

The Christian's Armor (Eph. 6:10-11)

A Good Soldier of Jesus (2 Tim. 2:1-11)

Jesus Bestows Peace (John 14:23-27)

The Peace of God (Phil. 4:6-9)

**LESSON SETTINGS**

Time.—For Matt. 5:43-48, probably A.D. 28; for Rom. 13:1-7, about A.D. 58.

*Places.*—The "Sermon on the Mount" was preached on a mountain in Galilee. The Roman letter was written at Corinth.

*Persons.*—Jesus, his disciples, the multitudes, Paul, and the Roman brethren.

*Lesson Links.*—When any matters concerning the church are to be considered, no clear conclusions can be arrived at without first knowing what the church is. Certain terms are applied to the people of God that give us an idea as to what the church is, and how came it to be in existence. Christ purchased the church with his own blood. (Acts 20:28.) He loved the church, and gave himself up for it. (Eph. 5:25.) The church is composed of people whom he has called out of sin into a holy life. "For God called us not for uncleanness, but in sanctification." (1 Thess. 4:7.) "... whereunto he called you through our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. 2:13, 14.) "But like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living." (1 Pet. 1:15.) "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called." (Eph. 4:1.) "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful." (Col. 3:15.) "And he is the head of the body, the church." (Col. 1:18.) The Greek word translated church means "the called out"—called out of sin into holiness of life. The word is sometimes applied to all people in the world who have been called out of sin by or through the gospel, and sometimes it refers to a group of called out people in a given locality. Some of the references already given give us some idea of the purpose Jesus had in view in giving himself that the church might be.

The church is meant to be a character builder—it exists that men and women may be fitted for service here and for heaven and immortal glory in the world to come. It is God's character factory—it begins with the raw material, the sinner, transforms him into a saint, fits him for the Master's use, and for heaven and immortal glory. That, through peace and war, through all the centuries of its existence, has been its mission. Changing conditions do not change the mission of the church, though conditions sometimes hinder its progress.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### "Love Your Enemies" (Verses 43-45)

Through a mistaken conception of the law, or through a development of the tradition of the elders, the Jews had adopted many tenets not found in the law of Moses. The teaching to hate their enemies was one such tenet. The law of Moses had no such command. The law did say, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," but it did not command them to hate their enemies. (Lev. 19:18.) Hate was a doctrine the Jews taught without the authority of the law. They held more tenaciously to the tradition of the elders than they did to the law of Moses, so much so that they would violate a command of the law to keep their tradition. But the word "hate" is sometimes used in the sense of love less. We usually attach to the word "hate" a certain amount of bitter feeling, but the word as used in the Bible does not always imply any bitterness of feeling. Example: "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother,

and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:26.) Jesus was not requiring that we have any bitterness of feeling toward all these, for elsewhere we are commanded to love them; but we must not be so devoted to them as to allow them to influence us against following Jesus. And the requirement to love our neighbor and even our enemy does not mean that we must have real affection for them, such as we have for members of our own family, for affections cannot be commanded. We are fulfilling the command when we treat all men right. Jesus shows us how to love our enemies—"pray for them that persecute you." Or as stated in Luke: "Love your enemies," and then Jesus proceeds to show how we are to love them, "do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you." (Luke 6:27, 28.) To do this is to fulfill the command to love our enemy; and Jesus says that you must do this, "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."

### **Must Be Better than Publicans and Gentiles (Verses 46-48)**

It is an easy matter to be fair, and even generous, toward those who are good to us; but even so, there are people who will take advantage of you when you try to be fair and honest with them, or even when you go out of your way to do them a favor. It is sometimes hard to know when you are doing good to folks like that. You certainly are not doing good to them if you put yourself in a position in which you become an easy victim of their greed. That encourages them in their meanness, and that certainly is not good for them; but there is reward in treating such folks as that right, if you can manage to do so. But there is no reward in being good to people who are good to us. And it seems that the word "salute" means more than a mere nod of the head, but requires a certain amount of courtesy. It • seems to be almost impossible for some people to show any degree of courtesy toward people they dislike. And some think it is below their dignity to show any courtesy, or even to recognize, one whom they consider their inferior. But to do what the Lord requires is to have the perfection he demands.

### **Submission to Civil Government Required (Rom. 13:1, 2)**

Sometimes the chapter divisions break the connection of thought. "The present division of the whole Bible into chapters was made by Cardinal Hugo de St. Chef about 1250." Division into verses came about three hundred years later. (Rom. 13:1-7 is a continuation and development of the matter of the latter part of chapter 12.) "If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men." (Rom. 12:18.) It is not possible to be at peace with some people; but we must try. If people do you wrong, "avenge not yourselves." Then Paul quotes Deut. 32:35 and Prov. 25:21, 22. These Old Testament scriptures therefore became a part of the New Testament, but that did not change their meaning nor limit their application; they still had their original application and limitation. They simply meant then, and mean now; that the injured party is not to take matters in his own hand; for God has an orderly way to take vengeance on evildoers, and that is the government. Then, as now, vengeance had

to be visited upon the criminal in a way prescribed by law. If a man tries to take matters in his own hand to punish an evildoer, he is not being submissive to the higher powers. Vengeance belongs to God, and all power to execute vengeance is his; but so far as punishment of crimes in this life goes, he had made civil authorities his agents to execute vengeance on the criminal. God has ordained, or appointed, them for that purpose. The individual therefore who undertakes to do what the authorities are appointed to do, withstands the ordinance of God, and thereby becomes a lawbreaker; he becomes himself a criminal.

### **Civil Government a Minister of God (Verses 3-5)**

Civil governments do not always function as God intended they should; neither does the individual man. The most of men fail miserably to carry out the mission God intended for them; but that does not prove that man is of the devil from birth. God intended that a man should do right, and he intended that rulers be not a terror to the good work, but to the evil; but both frequently fail him. Certainly the government that functions as God intended it to do never oppresses or punishes the good citizen, any more than does a man who functions as God intended he should. Such a citizen has the praise of the government that carries out its God-appointed mission; for it "is a minister of God to thee for good." (The marginal reading has "it," and that is correct, for "power" is the antecedent.) If the government operates as God intended it should, the evildoer should be afraid; for such a power bears not the sword in vain. The sword is the symbol of capital punishment; with it the Roman government took the life of the citizen judged worthy of death. This civil power "is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil." But a government may, the same as a man, fail to function as God intended it should, and itself become criminal. God in his own way will have a reckoning with such governments; history records the fate of many such governments. For the sake of the country he lives in, the Christian should be obedient to the laws, unless they conflict with God's commands. And he must be submissive to constituted authority for the additional reason that God commands him to be. It is with him a matter of conscience, as well as of good citizenship. "Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake." If therefore a man disobeys the laws of the land, he disobeys the law of God, unless the laws of the land are contrary to the laws of God.

### **"Render to All Their Dues" (Verses 6, 7)**

This command—"Render to all their dues"—refers especially to obedience to the civil authorities, and yet it is what we should do in the discharge of our obligations to all men. After giving that general command, Paul gives some particular applications of it; "tribute to whom tribute is due." We obey the laws for conscience' sake—"For this cause ye pay tribute also." Paying taxes is therefore a matter of conscience on the part of the Christian. Any effort to evade the payment of a just portion of one's taxes is dishonest and a sin against God. A man might be dishonest in the payment of taxes by failing to make a full report of his taxable property. And dishonesty with the government is just as bad as dishonesty anywhere



else. "Fear to whom fear." We are to walk in the fear of the Lord. (Acts 9:31; Rom. 11:20.) And certainly we should fear those who would try to lead us into sin. "Honor to whom honor." Peter's language about covers the question as to whom to honor: "Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king." (1 Pet. 2:17.) A Christian cannot afford to be rude and disrespectful in his bearing toward others; he should especially be respectful to the officers of his government. It is not meant that a Christian should obey a law that is in conflict with a plain command of God. "We must obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29.) But even in this instance the apostles were not in reality disobeying any law, but were disregarding the unwarranted interference of some Jewish authorities who were moved by hatred instead of law. However, later the Christians did have to disregard and disobey the decrees of the Roman Emperor.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

The Christian should be the most law-abiding citizen of his community. He must not become a law unto himself and disobey a law because he thinks it interferes with some of his natural rights. "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well. For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bondservants of God." (1 Pet. 2:13-16.) Many Christians, even some preachers and church leaders, disobey the laws concerning driving on the highways, and thereby disobey the foregoing positive law of God. "My brethren, these things ought not so to be." (James 3:10.)

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Matt. 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:20-26.

Paul's example: Acts 21:30-40; 22:22-29; 23:12-35; 25:6-12.

Peter's teaching: 1 Pet. 2:13-16.

The mission of the church.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Give some discussion as to what the church is.  
What is the mission of the church?

#### Verses 43-45

Read and discuss verses 43-45.  
How obey the command to love our neighbor and our enemy?

#### Verses 46-48

Discuss verses 46-48.

#### Rom. 13:1, 2

Discuss these verses in the light of what Paul had just said.

#### Verses 3-7

Read and discuss verses 3-7.  
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VIII—November 19, 1944

**CHRISTIANITY AND DEMOCRACY**  
Mark 12:13-17; Rom. 13:8-10; 1 Pet. 2:13-17

13 And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians. that they might catch him in talk.

14 And when they were come, they say unto him, Teacher, we know that thou art true, and carest not for any one; for thou regardest not the person of men, but of a truth teachest the way of God: Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?

15 Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why make ye trial of me? bring me a denarius, that I may see it.

16 And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's.

17 And Jesus said unto them, Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's. And they marveled greatly at him.

8 Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law.

9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law.

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.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." (Gal. 8:2.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Psalm 103:1-5, 8-13.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

November 13. M

November 14. T

November 15. W

November 16. T

November 17. F

November 18. S

November 19. S

God and Caesar (Mark 12:13-17)

Love and Law (Rom. 13:8-10)

Christians and Civil Law (1 Pet. 2:13-17)

Dealing with Offenders (Matt. 18:15-17)

Restoring an Erring One (Gal. 6:1, 2)

Unbiased Leadership (1 Tim. 5:17-22)

Brotherly Love (1 John 3:10-16)

**LESSON SETTINGS**

*Time.*—For Mark 12:13-17, apparently Tuesday of the week of the crucifixion; for Rom. 13:8-10, about A.D. 58; for 1 Pet. 2:13-17, date uncertain.

*Places.*—Jerusalem, Corinth, Babylon.

*Persons.*—Jesus and certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, Paul and the Roman brethren, and Peter and "the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia."

*Lesson Links.*—All that can properly be embraced in the term Christianity can be included in the term kingdom of God. The

citizens of that kingdom are Christians; but they have nothing to do with making laws for the kingdom, for it is an absolute monarchy. No matter how wise a group of Christians or professed Christians may be, they have not been empowered to make laws to govern people in matters pertaining to their religion. The church is not a government by the people, though it is a government for the people; this kingdom is an absolute monarchy. In an absolute monarchy the king is the sole ruler. In a constitutional monarchy the king, as well as the citizen, is limited by the constitution. The kingdom of Christ, being an absolute monarchy, has no constitution. The New Testament is therefore not the constitution of the kingdom of Christ; it contains the decrees of its monarch, the Lord Jesus Christ. In this kingdom there are no privileged classes. But the kingdom of Christ is not a democracy in its form of government. One definition of democracy—"absence of snobbery"—fits what should be the relations of Christians in their association one with another. "My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come into your synagogue a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, and there come in also a poor man in vile clothing; and ye have regard to him that weareth the fine clothing, and say, Sit thou here in a good place; and ye say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit under my footstool; do ye not make distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? ... Howbeit if ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors." (James 2:1-9.) It is very unfortunate that some people, even professed Christians, think that a little wealth puts them above the poor. That is one of the snares of the devil in which some otherwise good people are caught. (1 Tim. 6:9.) Class consciousness is a bad thing for any Christian, whether he be rich or poor, educated or uneducated.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### On Paying Tribute (Verses 13-17)

(Parallel Passages—Matt. 22:15-22; Luke 20:20-26)

The student should compare the parallel passages; it is always helpful to do this, Politically the Pharisees and Herodians were enemies, but they could easily join forces to carry out a scheme of wickedness. Luke says, "They watched him, and sent forth spies, who feigned themselves to be righteous, that they might take hold of his speech, so as to deliver him up to the rule and to the authority of the governor." If they could catch Jesus in some treasonable talk, they would report him to the Roman governor; and he would then have him arrested and executed, and they would not have to worry any more about how to get him out of the way. These men needed very much to be taught by Jesus, but did not know it. The only interest they had in talking to the greatest teacher the world has ever known was to entrap him in his talk; and yet on this occasion they thought they might deceive him into thinking they were really wanting information. They came to him with this question: "Teacher, we know that thou art true, and carest not for any One; for thou regardest not the person of men, but of a truth teachest the way of

God: Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?" They came to him with the most complimentary speech they could think up. Had they been sincere their speech would have been a credit to them, for they were stating the truth, but on their hypocritical lips it was a lie—they meant not a word they spoke. By their flattering speech they thought to wheedle him into coming out strongly on one side or the other of their much-disputed question. The arden Jew had never become reconciled to the idea of paying tribute to the Roman government. If Jesus said it was according to the law of Moses for Jews to pay tribute to Caesar, many of the Jews would turn against him; if he said it was not lawful to pay this tribute money, they would charge him with teaching treason against Caesar. In their mind they had him in a dilemma from which there was no way of escape. They had never concocted a shrewder scheme to get Jesus into trouble. Their motives were as base as their scheme was shrewd.

They did not deceive Jesus by their flattering speech; he knew their hypocrisy. According to Matthew's report, Jesus said, "Why make ye trial of me, ye hypocrites?" They saw at once that they had not deceived him as to their motives. They may have resented his bluntly calling them hypocrites, but they knew they were. "Bring me a denarius, that I may see it." The denarius was a Roman coin, worth about seventeen cents, and was then the pay for a day's labor. According to Matthew Jesus said, "Show me the tribute money." Having examined the denarius, he said, "Whose is this image and superscription?" The denarius bore the image of the emperor under whose reign it was coined, together with his title in abbreviated words. The question Jesus asked implied, "Who issued this coin? Whose is it?" He would have them to commit themselves; they replied, "Caesar's." Now they were caught in a dilemma; the trappers themselves were caught. They had Caesar's money, and were using it in their business transactions; would they return it when Caesar called for it? Jesus so advised: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." They used Caesar's money; they had also Caesar's protection from robbery and murder and other forms of lawlessness. They were secure under his protection so long as they behaved. They also used the roads Caesar built. To accept the services of Caesar, and then not bear their part of the expenses, would have been dishonest. Neither should a Christian now avoid paying his taxes. "And unto God the things that are God's. As the coin bore the image of Caesar, so do we bear the image of God. Give Caesar his coin—it belongs to him; give yourselves to God—you belong to him. Some of the Jews thought they could not be faithful to God and pay tribute to a foreign government; to them the question was, Shall we obey God, or shall we obey Caesar? Jesus showed them that they confronted no such difficulty—that there was no such alternative. It was not, "Obey God or Caesar"; but, "Obey God and Caesar." It is a Christian's duty to obey the laws of his government as well as the laws of God, so long as the laws of his government do not conflict with the laws of God. In this country that conflict rarely comes; or rather, such a conflict has not yet arisen.

### **Love Fulfills the Law (Rom. 13:8-10)**

Paul had warned the brethren against taking matters into their

own hands and taking vengeance against those who harmed them. (Rom. 12:17-21.) Evildoers should be punished in an orderly and legal way; God had appointed civil rulers to attend to this very thing. A Christian must not feel that he owes anyone a personal grudge. If a man does a Christian a wrong, the Christian must not feel that he should pay him back in kindness. No Christian should say, as sometimes men do say, "I owe that man a good beating." He does not owe that man any such thing; all he owes him is love. Paul was not here speaking of financial obligations. Sometimes someone takes the statement, "owe no man anything," and disregards its connection, and makes it apply to financial obligations; when, as a matter of fact, Paul had said nothing about finances. And some take the statement, "love therefore is the fulfilment of the law," to mean, that just to love a person in a sentimental way is all that is required; and yet the apostle gives instruction in connection with the statement, showing what it is to love. The love the Bible requires is not a sentiment; it is action—such action as helps the needy, and does no harm to anyone. "He that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law." Then Paul tells some of the things that constitute the love God requires; in doing this, he quotes some of the ten commandments—those that relate to our duties to one another. In reality Paul's quoting them in the way he does makes the ones he quotes a part of the New Testament. His quoting did not change their meaning in the least degree. The command, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," is easily understood, and means in the New Testament just what it meant when spoken from Sinai. The same is true of the command, "Thou shalt not kill." It prohibited murder, and not legal executions. Making the command a part of the New Testament did not extend its application to things not formerly included. "Thou shalt not steal." The child should early be taught not to take things that belong to others, even not to take things that belong to other children in the family. He should learn that the things that belong to others do not belong to him. If this principle is thoroughly planted in the child, he will not steal. One of the peculiar things about human beings is that no one ever seems to think he is covetous. Paul calls covetousness "idolatry." (Col. 3:5.) There are many idolaters who do not recognize themselves as such.

It is true that our Lord, in the Sermon on the Mount, condemned the thoughts and feelings that give rise to the overt act of disobedience. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law." Or to put the last clause in the order in which it occurs in the Greek: "A fulfilling of the law is the love"; that is, to fulfill the law is to love one's neighbor. If a man does all that God requires concerning a neighbor, he fulfills the requirement to love his neighbor. It is impossible for him to have the same feelings toward a neighbor, or an enemy, that he has toward the members of his own family, and God does not require him to have such feelings.

### **A Christian and His Government (1 Pet. 2:13-17)**

Sometimes a member of the church will disobey a law because he thinks it is useless, or because he thinks it interferes with some of his fancied natural rights. He becomes therefore a law unto himself; that attitude toward his government is the essence of anarchy. There can be no peace and security without law and men to enforce the

law. Sometimes certain laws do seem to be useless, but so long as such laws are in existence they should be obeyed. The king was not selected by the people, and the governors were appointed by him; the people had nothing to do with selecting them, and yet they were required to be subject to them. Governments exist "for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well"; but governments, like churches, sometimes depart from their God-appointed work. Evidently some early Christians thought they could not be subject to both Christ and Caesar; and their enemies sought to make it appear that they were traitors. To offset this Peter exhorts them to so conduct themselves that they would "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men," and not to use their freedom in Christ as a cloak of wickedness. A Christian must conduct himself in an honorable Way toward all men; a Christian cannot afford to be guilty of dishonorable conduct toward anyone, especially toward the rulers of his Country. Fear of God—reverence for him—should control the Christian in all his thoughts and activities.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

In a world of confusion it is hard for a Christian to keep his thinking straight and his conduct in harmony with the word of God. His political thinking and practices are likely to color his thinking and influence his practice in matters pertaining to the activities of the church. It seems that some preachers want to make local churches small democracies long enough to work up a sufficient majority to install them as dictators.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

In matters of government what is the church?  
The Christian and his government.  
What is freedom in Christ?

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
What can be embraced in the term Christianity?  
As to government, what is the church?  
Discuss what James says about snobbery.

#### Verses 13-17

Who were the Pharisees and the Herodians ?  
What is said of them in this lesson?  
Discuss their efforts to entrap Jesus, and how they failed.

#### Rom. 13:8-10

What had Paul been discussing?  
Discuss "owe no man anything."  
What constitutes love?  
Repeat the commands Paul quotes from the decalogue, and discuss them.  
Discuss verse 10.

#### 1 Pet. 2:13-17

What laws of the government should Christians obey?  
Who were then rulers?  
What is freedom in Christ?  
Repeat and discuss verse 17.  
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IX—November 26, 1944

### THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF INDUSTRY

Luke 19:15-26; 2 Thess. 3:10-12

15 And it came to pass, when he was come back again, having received the kingdom, that he commanded these servants, unto whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by trading.

16 And the first came before him, saying, Lord, thy pound hath made ten pounds more.

17 And he said unto him, Well done, thou good servant: because thou wast found faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

18 And the second came, saying Thy pound, Lord, hath made five pounds.

19 And he said unto him also, Be thou also over five cities.

20 And another came. saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I kept laid up in a napkin:

21 For I feared thee. because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that which thou layedst not down, and reapest that which thou didst not sow.

22 He saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I am an austere man, taking up that which I laid not down, and reaping that which I did not sow;

23 Then wherefore gavest thou not my money into the bank, and I at my coming should have required it with interest?

24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take away from him the pound. and give it unto him that hath the ten pounds.

25 And they said unto him. Lord, he hath ten pounds.

26 I say unto you, that unto every one that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him.

10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, If any will not work, neither let him eat.

11 For we hear of some that walk among you disorderly, that work not at all. but are busybodies.

12 Now them that are such we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread,

*GOLDEN TEXT.* "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.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Prov. 31:10-20.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

November 20. M

November 21. T

November 22. W

November 23. T

November 24. F

November 25. S

November 26. S

A Parable of Industry (Luke 19:12-26)

Dealing with Busybodies (2 Thess. 3:10-12)

Toil Under a Tyrant (Ex. 5:2-18)

An Ungrateful Servant (Matt. 18:23-30)

Counsel to Servants (1 Tim. 6:1-6)

Counsel to the Rich (1 Tim. 6:9-11)

The Rich Warned (James 5:1-6)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 31, the week before the week of the crucifixion; Second Thessalonians was written A.D. 52 or 53.

*Places.*—Jericho, or on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem; Second Thessalonians was probably written at Corinth.

*Persons.*—If the parable was spoken in the house of Zacchaeus, it is not likely that any were present but Jesus, his disciples, and Zacchaeus and his family. Verse 11 seems to indicate that the parable was spoken as they neared Jerusalem; if so, a multitude would also be present.

*Lesson Links.*—The time of the crucifixion was drawing nigh, and Jesus was on his last journey to Jerusalem. In the house of Zacchaeus, where he lodged, he said, "To-day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear." When Jesus spoke of himself as the Son of man, declaring that he came to seek and to save the

lost, he virtually announced that he was the Messiah, for that was to be the work of the promised Messiah. The throngs attending him elected him to become king on reaching Jerusalem. This expectation grew until, on reaching the environs of Jerusalem, they proclaimed him the Messiah. And yet he spoke this parable to hold in check Such expectation. But their expectation was so high that the parable he spoke had no immediate effect on the multitude. They expected to have a mighty Prince on the throne in Jerusalem, under whose leadership they might gain their independence from the hated Romans and subdue the whole world. They expected Jesus to begin that work as soon as he reached Jerusalem. Their plans and the purpose of Jesus were far apart.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### **The Nobleman Returns for a Reckoning (Verse 15)**

The parable is stated in verses 12-14: "He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called ten servants of his, and gave them ten pounds, and said unto them, Trade ye herewith till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent an ambassage after him, saying, We will not that this man reign over us." This certain nobleman was perhaps one of the Herods. Some authorities think the reference was to Archelaus, the son of Herod the Great, but any of these tributary kings had to go to Rome to receive authority to reign. Parables were based on incidents and customs that prevailed in that day and country. Because some of these incidents and customs are not familiar to us, it makes it difficult for us to understand some of the parables. When Jesus himself explained a parable, as he sometimes did, his explanation is final. Usually there is one lesson to be learned from a parable; to seek to get more out of a parable than was intended is to make it "go on all fours," and to do violence to the Savior's teaching. The parable of our lesson is a lesson on faithfulness, and it cannot be made to fit at every point; to attempt to do so is to destroy the intended lesson. By ignoring the intent of the parable of our lesson much hurtful speculation can be, and has been, indulged in. Evidently Jesus is the nobleman of the parable, that is, the nobleman represents Jesus. And Jesus had enemies who would not have him to reign over them, but these enemies did not actually Send an embassage to heaven to keep him from receiving the kingdom. They did do everything they could even killed him—to keep him from being king, and tried to destroy his kingdom after it was established. That was as far as they could go. The ten servants of the nobleman cannot be made to represent ten servants in the kingdom of God; God has had more than ten servants on earth. And certainly more than ten servants will have to give account for their conduct. And it will be noticed that only three of the servants are said to have made a report. It can therefore be seen that not everything in the parable' represents something like it in the kingdom of God.

#### **The Report of Two Servants (Verses 16-19)**

The main point of emphasis in this lesson is faithfulness in our service to God.. It seems that the pounds, as also the talents in Matt. 25:14, 20, represent the opportunities Christians have for



doing service for God. The first servant to report to the returning king had showed himself to be a good financier; it shows also that he had been a busy man. He had been faithful in the trust Committed to him. Our Lord would have us to be busy in his service—to use every opportunity to advance his cause in the earth. "Lord, thy pound hath made ten pounds." He was able to return his lord's pound with ten other pounds—ten pounds clear profit. That was a one-thousand per cent gain, and was pleasing to his lord. "And he said unto him, Well done, thou good servant: because thou wast found faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities." Some of the advocates of a supposed future kingdom in which Jesus will reign in a world kingdom here on earth seem to forget that this statement is a part of the parable, and argue that the servant of God who proves himself to be faithful and capable will have rule over as many cities as he is capable of managing. But if the ten cities are to be taken as literal, why not the pounds? The language clearly teaches that the faithful servant of the Lord will be abundantly rewarded; he is rewarded here with increased opportunities for doing good, and hereafter he will be rewarded with an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom. (2 Pet. 1:11.) This reward is also spoken of as eternal life. (Matt. 25:46; Rom. 6:23.) The second servant reporting had not done so well as the first. "Thy pound, Lord, hath made five pounds." His lord did not criticize him for not doing so well as the first servant, but said, "Be thou also over five cities." Both servants had done well. In the lesson Jesus intended to teach by this parable, the ten cities and the five cities do not mean, that, in some supposed future kingdom, these servants will be given real cities to rule over, any more than it means that our Lord gives each of his servants a pound to trade with, or that he had only ten servants. Those who want the parable to have such literal application will need to explain why only three of the ten servants reported.

### **Report of the Third Servant (Verses 20-23)**

The third servant reporting professed to be a very careful man; he had not taken any chances on losing the pound entrusted to him. His lord had said to the ten when he gave each of them a pound, "Trade ye herewith till I come." He had not obeyed his lord; he was afraid to do anything, and so did the wrong thing. He carefully wrapped his pound in a towel, and laid it away for safekeeping. He was determined to return to his lord the exact amount given him—he would lose nothing his lord put in his care. His attitude toward his lord showed the kind of man he himself was. A man always reveals his character when he passes judgment on a person or law or principle. This servant's harsh judgment of his lord leads one to the conclusion that his lord in the past had found it necessary to deal severely with this slothful servant. Hence the servant's harsh judgment: "Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I kept laid up in a napkin: for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that which thou layedst not down, and reapest that which thou didst not sow." He was charging his lord with dishonesty and unrighteous greed—charging him with picking up things that did not belong to him and with reaping harvests that belonged to others. These were reckless charges for a servant to make against his lord,

who could deal with him as he pleased. But his lord answered him as if the charges were true. "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant." He showed wickedness in his estimate of his lord, as well as in his neglect of duty. His own excuse condemned him, "Thou knewest that I am an austere man, . . ." That is, if you regard me as such a hard master, that is the more reason why you should have tried hard to do your duty. He was slothful, and also antagonistic toward his lord.

### **The Wicked Servant Loses What He Has (Verses 24-26)**

Opportunities for service and the blessings for faithful service are lost by the servant who renders no service, and they go to the servant who is faithful. This is a sort of universal law. The man in business who takes advantage of no opportunities will soon find that all opportunities and profits go to the man who faithfully attends to his business. If the Christian does not use the opportunities for doing good that come his way, he will soon find that someone else is doing the things he should have done, and enjoying all the blessings that come for such service. The one pound was taken from the wicked servant and given to the faithful servant. What little a man has will be taken away, if he does not make use of it. "I say unto you, that unto every one that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him." Verse 27 tells how the enemies fared: "But these mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me."

### **Work, or Not Eat (2 Thess. 3:10-12)**

As an apostle Paul had a right to a support; but conditions at Thessalonica were such that he considered it best for the cause of Christ to supply his own needs by the labor of his hands. He would set them a pattern of honest labor. It seems that there were idlers in that city; some of them were members of the church. In his first letter to these brethren Paul exhorts them to "abound more and more; and that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your hands, even as we charged you; that ye may walk becomingly toward them that are without, and may have need of nothing." (1 Thess. 4:10-12.) But that exhortation did not cure some of their idleness. Paul had charged them in his preaching to work; "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, If any will not work, neither let him eat." It is the law of God, that a man live from the fruits of his own work. (Gen. 3:17.) If a man can work, but will not work, we violate God's law when we feed him—"neither let him eat." Such a man is not honest, and no Christian should be a party to his dishonesty by feeding him. The person, man or woman, that will not work will be busy about something else; it was so at Thessalonica. Such people are disorderly, busybodies, meddling in other people's affairs. They become gossipers and troublemakers, and Paul charges the brethren to withdraw themselves from all such Characters. (Verse 6.) Paul clearly implies that the man who does not work steals. "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.) "Now them that are such we

command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread." Instead of meddling in other people's affairs, they should quietly work to supply their own needs. Honest work is a cure for many social ills. A man or a woman cannot meddle much in other people's affairs while busy at honest work.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Work is not a curse. Even before Adam sinned, he was put into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. (Gen. 2:15.) The curse for his sin increased his labor, for then he had to combat noxious growths. And labor brought weariness, because man had not access to the invigorating fruit of the tree of life. (Gen. 3.)

There is development of character in honest work. It is good for a man to feel that he is not a parasite, but is carrying his part of the load. It is also good for him to be able and willing to help those who cannot help themselves. Even preachers would gain force of character, a feeling of independence, and influence with the people, if they would follow Paul's example.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Why people should work.  
Why Paul worked with his hands,  
What to do with the idle.

### QUESTIONS

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

Discuss the reports of the first two servants.  
What is the lesson intended to be taught?

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
What did the people expect?

#### Verses 20-23

Discuss the third report, and its lesson.

#### Verse 15

State the parable of the pounds.  
What is a common source of error in interpreting parables?

#### Verses 24-26

Discuss these verses.

#### 2 Thess. 3:10-12

Read and discuss each of these verses.  
Discuss the reflections.

#### Verses 16-19

Lesson X—December 3, 1944

### WORLD-WIDE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

John 17:18-23; 1 Cor. 1:1-3; 12:4-7, 12, 13

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.  
1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, even them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their Lord and ours:

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all.

7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal.

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.

13 For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one." (John 17:20, 21.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING*—Col. 1:16-23.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

November 27. M

November 28. T

November 29. W

November 30. T

December 1. F

December 2. S

December 3. S

All One in Christ (John 17:18-23)

Greeting to All the Saints (1 Cor. 1:1-3)

One Body in Christ (1 Cor. 12:4-7, 12, 13)

The Messiah's Mission (Isa. 42:1-7)

All Need Salvation (Rom. 3:21-23, 29, 30)

The New Bond of Fellowship (Gal. 5:1-6)

The Basis of Fellowship (1 John 1:3-7)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—For John 17:18-23, probably A.D. 31; for First Corinthians, probably A.D. 57.

*Places.*—Jerusalem and Macedonia.

*Persons.*—Jesus and his disciples, Paul and the saints at Corinth.

*Lesson Links.*—There can be no Christian fellowship where there are no Christians; and unless there are some Christians in all parts of the world there can be no such thing as world-wide Christian fellowship. There can be no fellowship between antagonistic parties. Fellowship sometimes means comradeship; it is close akin to partnership. There is fellowship when people are united in working to accomplish a certain purpose or to reach a certain goal. Confusion and strife destroy fellowship even where it exists. A man's first and chief purpose should be to have fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ; when that is accomplished it puts one in fellowship with all who are in fellowship with Christ. "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." (1 John 1:3.) Many who are not in fellowship with Christ are deceived into thinking they have such fellowship. "If We say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 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 1:6, 7.) If therefore a man has fellowship with Christ, he is in fellowship with all who are in fellowship with Christ. "God is faithful, through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (1 Cor. 1:9.) Jesus Christ our Lord is therefore the center

of this fellowship, and all who are joined to him are joined in one fellowship. A fellowship that leaves him out—a fellowship built on human doctrine and practice—is not Christian fellowship, though such fellowship might become world-wide. Calling such a fellowship Christian fellowship does not make it so. Be not deceived; only the fellowship based on Jesus as our Savior, our teacher, our high priest, and our king can be called Christian or be of any real value. People may have fellowship even in dark schemes; but Christians are admonished to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." (Eph. 5:11.) "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6:14.) All the fellowship a Christian can afford to have with anyone must come through his adherence to the Lord Jesus Christ.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### **The Sent Becomes the Sender (Verses 18, 19)**

In a brief way God's plan is set forth in verse 18. Out of love for sinners God sent his Son into the world to redeem man from sin and condemnation. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him." (John 3:16, 17.) God sent his Son into the world to do a certain work. In this prayer Jesus said, "I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do." (Verse 4.) Up to this time he had been active in doing his Father's will; but he was that night to become passive in the hands of his enemies. No small part of his ministry had been devoted to training his apostles for the work they were to do, so that they could carry on his work after he ascended to his Father. "Now they know that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are from thee: for the words which thou gavest me I have given unto them; and they received them, and knew of a truth that I came forth from thee, and they believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me; for they are thine." (Verses 7-9.) "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth. As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world." Because they were to be sent to carry on his work, he called them "apostles"; for the word "apostle" means one sent. The word translated "sanctify" meant among the Greeks, to devote to a god or gods. Hence, in the New Testament, to be sanctified is to be devoted to God, that is, given to him. The sanctified person is a person wholly devoted to God.

#### **Jesus Prays for Oneness (Verses 20-23)**

Jesus had been praying for his apostles, but in verse 20 he begins to pray "for them also that believe on me through their word." These apostles had been selected to reveal the gospel in its fullness, and their testimony is on record. If we did not have this record, we would be in dense spiritual darkness. In giving his purpose in writing his record, John states the purpose of all the apostles: "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.) Jesus prayed for those who believed on him through the word of the apostles. If one claims to have come into possession of faith in some way other than the word of the apostles, then he has no part in this prayer. The special thing for which Jesus prayed was that all who believed on him through the word of the apostle might be one, "that the world may believe that thou didst send me." The divided condition of those who profess to believe in Jesus as the Christ is confusing to many people. In this prayer Jesus sets forth the perfect unity that exists between him and the Father. "The Father in him and he in the Father, all that is the Father's is his, and his is the Father's. They have no separate will, kingdom, or interest. Such a union is demanded among the disciples of Christ."—Johnson. The glory of being the Son of God was Christ's, and by enabling us to become sons of God he has conferred on us that glory. Nothing can come to man that is more glorious than to be made a son of God, and an heir of God. All who are in Christ, all who are at peace with him, are perfected into one—into one body. It would be a glorious thing if all who professed to be Christians were really one in Christ. "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful." (Col. 3:15.) "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all." (Eph. 4:4-6.) Of Christ Paul says, "For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in Ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." (Eph. 2:14-16.) All races are therefore to be reconciled unto God in one body, in one new man. This body is the church. (Col. 1:18.)

### **Paul's Salutation to the Saints at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:1-3)**

By preaching the gospel Paul planted the church at Corinth. "Many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." (Read Acts 18:1-11; 1 Cor. 3:6-8.) This letter to Corinth was written to correct several errors that had crept into the church there. It will be noticed that in "called to be an apostle," and in "called to be saints," the "to be" is in italics, which means that the phrase was supplied by the translators. Literally, Paul a called apostle, an apostle that had been called by the Lord Jesus Christ. He had not merely assumed to be an apostle, but had been called. The letter was addressed to the church of God in Corinth; that church was corn, posed of them that had been sanctified, saints who had been called by the gospel. But the letter was also meant for "all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place." No matter where people obey the gospel, no matter to what race the obedient belong, Jesus Christ is their Lord as well as ours; and grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ extend to all alike. In preaching the gospel there should be no racial prejudices or racial limitations. Jesus died for all, and all should have the gospel to the extent that they will receive it.

**Concerning Spiritual Gifts (1 Cor. 12:4-7)**

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." The gifts here referred to are mentioned in verses 8-10. These are not called the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit, and therefore had all these gifts. (Acts 1:4, 5; 2:1-4.) But why these gifts? Well, the apostles could not be everywhere in person to teach the people, and the New Testament had not been written. These gifts of the Spirit were as necessary then as the Bible is now. They could not translate the New Testament into different tongues, for they had no written New Testament. The gift of tongues supplied that deficiency. Problems came up in which they needed light; hence some had the gift of prophecy—the gift that enabled them to make known the will of God. Some were enabled to work miracles, to show an unbeliever that God was with them, and that therefore their claims were true. "But all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will." (Verse 11.) The Holy Spirit himself decided who should have this gift or that; his will determined the matter. A spiritual gift was not imparted to anyone for his own peculiar benefit. If a man were an inspired teacher, he benefitted no more from his inspiration than did the people to whom he made revelations. And certainly no one had the gift of healing for his own individual benefit. Verse 7: "But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal." Macknight gives this translation of the verse: "And to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the advantage of all." That is better, for the word "withal" means very little to the average reader of today. As every gift of the Spirit was for the benefit, or advantage, of all, one wonders what advantage, or benefit, congregations today receive from this pretended speaking in tongues. A supposed language that no one understands can be of no benefit to anyone, and is therefore not a gift of the Spirit. From what is said in verses 8-10 it seems that ordinarily only one gift of the Spirit was bestowed on a man; but it is plain that Philip had two gifts, namely, inspiration and the power to work miracles. (Acts 8:5-13.)

**"Baptized into One Body" (Verses 12, 13)**

There are many members composing a human body; yet there is only one body. "So also is Christ." The lesson is plain. There are many members in this spiritual body, yet there is but the one body. The different members have each its own function, or use; it is so in the body of Christ. (Verses 14-27.) Into this one body all its members have been baptized, by the direction of the Holy Spirit. (The Greeks sometimes expressed agency or instrument by their preposition "en.") Men of every race are baptized into this one body, "and were all made to drink of one Spirit." With the revelation the Holy Spirit made and left on record, we have access to all that pertains to life and godliness. (2 Pet. 1:3.)

**SOME REFLECTIONS**

In the Great Commission Jesus commanded that the gospel be preached among all the nations. "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him: for, Whosoever shall call upon the name: of

the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. 10:12, 13.) "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: hut in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34, 35.) Some of the Jews in the early church never did recognize the right of the Gentiles, as such, to the blessings of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ; these were constant disturbers in the church.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

John 3:14-17.  
The scope of the Great Commission.  
Peter's preaching to Gentiles.

### QUESTIONS

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

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
How can there be world-wide Christian fellowship?  
How may professed Christians have fellowship?  
What is Christian fellowship?  
With what are we to have no fellowship?

#### Verses 18, 19

Why was Jesus sent into the world?  
Discuss verse 4.  
In this prayer, for whom did Jesus first pray?  
Discuss verses 18, 19.

#### Verses 20-23

For whom did Jesus now begin to pray?  
Discuss how people are made believers.

What special petition did he make for believers?  
Discuss how people can be united.  
Discuss Col. 3:15 and Eph. 4:4-6.  
Discuss Eph. 2:14-16.

#### 1 Cor. 1:1-3

Tell how the church was planted at Corinth.  
Discuss these verses.

#### 1 Cor. 12:4-7

What were gifts of the Spirit?  
Why were these gifts then needed?  
Who benefitted by them?  
If a supposed gift benefitted no one, could it be a gift of the Spirit?

#### Verses 12, 13

Discuss as fully as possible these verses.  
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XI—December 10, 1944

### CHRIST IN THE HOME

Matt. 19:4-6; Luke 10:38-42; 2 Tim. 1:3-6

4 And he answered and said, Have ye not read, that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female,

5 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?

6 So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

38 Now as they went on their way, he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet, and heard his word.

40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving; and she came up to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

41 But the Lord answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things:

42 But one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience,



how unceasing is my remembrance of thee in my supplications, night and day

4 Longing to see thee, remembering thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

5 Having been reminded of the unfeigned faith that is in thee; which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and, I am persuaded, in thee also.

6 For which cause I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of my hands.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"These things I command you, that ye may love one another." (John 15:17.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Isa. 54:1-8.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

December	4.	M	God's Plan for the Home (Matt. 19:4-6)
December	5.	T	The Home in Bethany (Luke 10:38-42)
December	6.	W	The Home of Timothy (2 Tim. 1:3-6)
December	7.	T	Advice About Marriage (1 Cor. 7:10-16, 39)
December	8.	F	Marriage a Symbol (Eph. 5:22-32)
December	9.	S	Parents and Children (Eph. 6:1-4)
December	10.	S	Religion in the Home (Col. 3:16-24)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—For Matt. 19:4-6 and Luke 10:38-42, A.D. 30 or 31; for 2 Tim. 1:3-6, probably A.D. 66.

*Places.*—Perea, Bethany, and Rome.

*Persons.*—Jesus, the Pharisees, Martha, Mary, Paul, and Timothy.

*Lesson Links.*—In a general sense one's home is his dwelling place, the place where his family lives. But Christ is not in many homes in any sense; and of course he is not a visible guest in any home today. But there is a sense in which Christ is present with every true Christian, whether that Christian be at home or abroad. When that Christian is at home, Christ is in that home, and yet he may not rule all the members of the home. "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." (1 Cor. 11:3.) When this order prevails in a home, Christ is in that home as the head of the home. Jesus concluded Matthew's report of the Great Commission with the words, "and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Or, to adopt the marginal readings, "and lo, I am with you all the days,, even unto the consummation of the age." (Matt. 28:19, 20.) We can believe what Jesus says, though we are not able to fully comprehend how he is always with his followers. The language of Paul in Gal. 2:19, 20 may help some: "For I through the law died unto the law, that I might live unto God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me." If we live in faith in the Son of God, Christ lives in us. Persecuting Saul died. Hate for Christ once ruled in his heart and controlled his actions; that life came to an end, and a new life began—a life ruled by Christ. Christ lived in him, and was therefore living in him wherever he went. If the people constituting a family are living in the faith of the Son of God, their home is a Christian home—Christ lives in such homes, for he lives in each individual in that home.

But Christ cannot live in a home where confusion and strife, sin

and rebellion, reign; nor even in a home that is indifferent towards him. As indifference drove him out of the church at Laodicea, so will it drive him out of a home. (Rev. 3:14-22.) He will not remain Where he is not a welcome guest; yet he wishes to be your abiding guest. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### God's Original Marriage Law (Verses 4-6)

The Pharisees were a persistent lot. They tried to find Jesus doing something in violation of their own law; they tried to get him to say something that would turn the people of the Jews against him; they tried to get him to say something that would involve him in trouble with the Roman authorities. On the occasion of this part of our lesson they felt sure they had a question that he would have to answer in such a way as to turn some of the people against him; they would get him embroiled in one of their own controversies about the divorce question. On that question there was wide difference among them. Hillel, one of their very great teachers, had taught that a man might put away his wife for any cause, even if she did not please him; and she would not, if he saw another woman that he liked better. "Shammai, a Jewish rabbi of the first century B.C., founded a school directly antithetical to that of Hillel; so that it became a proverb, 'Hillel looses what Shammai binds.'"—Schaff-Herzog. The Pharisees thought they had a question that Jesus could not answer without antagonizing one of these schools. "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" (Verse 3.) They thought he would have to antagonize either the school of Hillel or that of Shammai if he answered their question. It is plain that they were not trying to find a correct solution of that much-discussed question. They were not expecting Jesus to intimate that they were ignorant of what the scriptures said.

"Have ye not read, that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female?" Or, "made them a male and a female?" He made one man for one woman, and one woman for one man; he did not make other women for Adam to turn to if Eve did not please him. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh?" Have you not read this scripture? This was God's original marriage law; in this original law of marriage no provision was made for any separation or divorce. It was the ideal law. Had there been no sin, no additions or exception to that law would have been made. That law holds good even now in homes where Christ rules supreme. But sin enters some homes and breaks the marriage vows. Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it hath not been so." (Verse 8.) Jesus mentions one sin that breaks the marriage ties. (Verse 9.)

#### Jesus in the Home of Friends (Luke 10:38-42)

"Now as they went on their way, he entered into a certain village:" This village was Bethany, for that was the home of these friends of Jesus. (John 11:1.) Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, is

not mentioned in connection with this visit; it is likely that he was not at home. Matthew, Mark, and Luke do not give as much prominence to this family as does John. Perhaps these friends of Jesus were still alive when Matthew, Mark, and Luke wrote; to give these friends of Jesus prominence while they yet lived and while the Jews remained in Jerusalem, and were so hostile to the followers of Christ, might have made it hard on them. It is generally understood that John wrote much later—long after the Jews were driven or carried out of Jerusalem. On this visit the apostles, and perhaps other disciples, were with Jesus. "A certain woman named Martha received him into her house." A group gathered about Jesus to hear his teaching. "And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet, and heard his word." Then the pupils sat at the feet of the teacher. Hence to sit at one's feet came to mean, to be his disciple. So it is said that Saul was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. (Acts 22:3.) While Mary and the others were sitting at the feet of Jesus and hearing his word, "Martha was cumbered about much serving." As head of the family she felt the responsibility of making everything pleasant for her guests. She was busy getting a good meal for her guests; and, as is usual with good women when they have to prepare for several guests, she was overdoing the matter. But what woman would not have done so if Jesus was one of the guests? We have all seen good women so taken up with providing material comforts for their guests that they had no time to enjoy their company. She was cumbered—distracted, for so the Greek word signifies. Mary was not helping her, and she became impatient about it. "And she came up to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone?" She must have been a high-strung, nervous woman, speaking sometimes without due thought, for that was not a very courteous way to speak to an honored guest, and especially while he was busily engaged in teaching. It seems that she was accusing the Lord of keeping Mary away from her household duties. Had she not worried herself into such a state of nerves, she would hardly have issued this order to the Lord: "Bid her therefore that she help me." Martha was a good woman, but she took her duties as hostess too seriously.

"But the Lord answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things." In this rebuke there is tenderness in the repetition of the name. It seems that Jesus meant that she was preparing too many things for the table. Jesus did not come there for a feast. "But one thing is needful." some think Jesus meant that she needed to Prepare but one thing. The circumstances lend color to that idea. Martha was distracted about too many material things. Jesus refused to do what Martha ordered him to do. "Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." If people live, they must eat; and if they eat, food must be prepared. Somebody must do the preparing; but too many people make the preparing and the eating of food the main thing. People may allow even the necessary things of life to so engage their attention and energy that the word of God is crowded out; like Martha, they are so absorbed in everyday affairs that they have no time to listen to the Lord.

### **Paul Longed to See Timothy (2 Tim. 1:3, 4)**

To the council in Jerusalem Paul said, "Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day." (Acts 23:1.) He had served God from his forefathers in a pure conscience; and this, too, while he was persecuting the church. While he was persecuting the church, he thought he was doing right—he had a good conscience; but his moral judgment was about as wrong as it could well be. Conscience is that feeling of pain or remorse when you go contrary to your moral judgment, or the feeling of pleasure when you do what your moral judgment tells you is right. Your judgment dictates what you should do; your conscience pricks or soothes. Though Paul was a prisoner, with no hope of escaping death, he did not fail to pray for Timothy, who was so dear to him. He, of course, was closely confined and forsaken by the brethren. "At my first defence no one took my part, but all forsook me." (2 Tim. 4:16.) Human companionship there was none. He longed to see his beloved Timothy, that he might be filled with joy. But in his lack of human companionship he gained comfort from the fact that the Lord was with him.

### **Timothy's Early Training and His Gift (Verses 5, 6)**

It seems that in this last imprisonment Paul was not allowed to preach, and so he had plenty of time for reflection. Naturally he would think much about Timothy, and would call to mind the sincerity of Timothy's faith. He knew that Timothy was no pretender—that his faith was genuine. Timothy's father was a Greek, but his mother was a Jewess. (Acts 16:1.) He had known the holy scriptures from a babe. (2 Tim. 3:15.) He had been taught what we now know as the Old Testament, for it is not likely that any of the New Testament had been written when Timothy was a babe. The Old Testament was able to make him wise unto salvation by leading him to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Of course his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois had taught him from childhood. These were good women. Paul had conferred some gift on Timothy by the laying on of hands, though we are not told what the gift was; but Timothy was admonished to stir up that gift. It seems that these spiritual gifts would fade away if not used. The same is true of natural gifts, natural abilities. And by the proper exercise of our powers for good we may increase our powers. Even our ability to judge between right and wrong grows by exercise—"who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil." (Heb. 5:14.)

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

It is a delight to be in some homes, homes in which Christ reigns. Members of the family are considerate of one another, and selfishness is unknown. They are bound close together by the ties of love.

"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." (Eph. 5:22-25.)

**TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION**

How husband and wife should regard each other.  
 How parents should treat their children.  
 The right attitude of children toward their parents.

**QUESTIONS**

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

**Lesson Settings**

Give time, places, and persons.  
 What is a home?  
 When is Christ in a home?

**Verses 4-6**

What question did the Pharisees ask Jesus, and why did they ask it?  
 What question in turn did Jesus ask them?  
 What was the original marriage law?

**Luke 10:38-42**

Tell about the home Jesus visited.  
 Tell about Martha and Mary on the occasion of this visit.

Why would Martha be so distracted with serving?  
 Give what she said to Jesus and his reply.

**2 Tim. 1:3, 4**

Discuss conscience.  
 Discuss the relations of Paul and Timothy.  
 Why did Paul then have no human companionship?

**Verses 5, 6**

What does Paul say of Timothy's faith?  
 What about Timothy's early training?  
 What admonition did Paul give Timothy concerning a certain gift?  
 Why stir up the gift?  
 What about our natural abilities?  
 Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XII—December 17, 1944

**CHRISTIAN LIVING AT ITS BEST**

Gal. 5:22 to 6:10

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,  
 23 Meekness, self-control; against such there is no law.  
 24 And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.  
 25 If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk.  
 26 Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another.

1 Brethren. even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

3 For if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

4 But let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone, and not of his neighbor.

5 For each man shall bear his own burden.

6 But let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

8 For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life.

9 And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk." (Gal. 5:25.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—1 John 4:7-21.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

December 11. M	Christian Love (1 John 4:7-11)
December 12. T	Love Made Perfect (1 John 4:12-21)
December 13. W	Putting Christ First (Luke 9:57-62)
December 14. T	The Christian's Lofty Calling (Col. 3:1-4)
December 15. F	Christianity, a New Life (Col. 3:5-15)
December 16. S	The Christian's Daily Walk (Eph. 5:6-17)
December 17. S	The Law of Love (1 Cor. 10:23-31)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—About A.D. 55.

*Place.*—It is said that the letter to the Galatians was written at Ephesus.

*Persons.*—Paul and the saints of Galatia.

*Lesson Links.*—We have no detailed account of Paul's preaching in Galatia; yet it is clear that he planted the churches in that province. We learn this from statements he makes in the letter to the Galatians. "Though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema." (Gal. 1:8.) "For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man." (Gal. 1:11.) Though Paul had planted the churches of Galatia, the Judaizing teachers had followed him. To get in their work most effectively, they had first to create in the minds of the saints the notion that Paul was not all apostle of Jesus Christ, and not therefore an inspired man. These Judaizers—professed Christians—taught Gentile Christians that they must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. (Acts 15:1-5.) It is singular that, while these Judaizers were trying to discredit Paul as an apostle, they themselves were disobeying the decrees sent out by all the apostles. (Acts 15:22-29.) They cared nothing for what any apostle taught if it disagreed with their notions; but the churches of Galatia had accepted Paul as an apostle, and his teaching therefore as binding. Hence, to get in their work of perverting the gospel and seducing the churches, they had first to discredit Paul as an apostle. For the sake of these churches Paul defended his claims to be all apostle. What he taught them he had not received from any man, but through revelation of Jesus Christ. When he saw the apostles years after he began preaching the gospel, they imparted nothing to him. (Gal. 2:1-10.) He also showed them that the law which these Judaizers were forcing upon these Gentile churches had ceased to be binding upon anyone. It was only a schoolmaster to lead to Christ, and that now we are no longer under the law. (Gal. 3:23-25.) Therefore no one, not even a Jew, could be justified by the law of Moses; and for a Gentile to seek to be justified by submitting to the law is to forsake Christ. "Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace." (Gal. 5:1-4.) "But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law." (Gal. 5:18.)

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### The Fruit of the Spirit (Verses 22, 23)

In Verses 19-21 Paul gives a list of the works of the flesh, and then told them plainly, "that they who practice such things shall not

inherit the kingdom of God." And then he presents the idea that the contrast between "sarx" (flesh) and "pneuma" (spirit) shows that Paul referred to the spiritual part of man. But it makes little difference which view is taken, since the fruits mentioned are the main thing, and since man is made responsible for these fruits. If the Holy Spirit is meant, then he bears the fruit only by so enlightening man's spirit through his inspired word that man's spirit bears these fruits. The works of the flesh—how ugly and hurtful they are; but the fruits of the spirit—how beautiful and helpful they are. The fruit of the Spirit gives to the Christian a worth-while character—calm, serene, steadfast, helpful, lovable. There is no law against the manifestation of such traits of character.

### **The Flesh Crucified (Verses 24-26)**

"And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof." That is a strong expression; it is figurative language, for a man does not literally crucify his body. In 1 Cor. 9:26, 27 Paul, using a term of the prize fight, says, "So fight I, as not beating the air: but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage." Literally, I give my body the knockout blow. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof. (Rom. 6:12.) If we really live by the Spirit, we walk by the Spirit; but we may profess to live by the Spirit, and still follow all the lusts and promptings of the flesh. We must follow the teachings of the Spirit as presented to us in the New Testament. A genuine Christian is not vainglorious; he does not overrate himself; he is neither conceited nor arrogant, He provokes no one, nor envies anyone.

### **On Restoring Trespassers (Gal. 6:1, 2)**

To err is the common lot of humanity. Some people recover themselves from any wrongdoing without persuasion or exhortation from anyone; but too often the wrongdoer continues in his wrong course, unless some godly person helps him out of it. Hence Paul's admonition to the spiritual to restore such unfortunates. But often someone who should never talk to anyone in error appoints himself to correct the trespasser and makes bad matters worse. Sometimes an elder says something like this: You have done thus and so. Unless you come up next Sunday and make your acknowledgments, we will withdraw from you. No meekness, no spirit of gentleness, but arrogant self-righteousness, is shown in every word and tone of voice. Such a one was tempted to display authority and superiority, and he yielded to the temptation; he was thus himself overtaken in a very serious trespass. He certainly did nothing toward bearing the burden of the one who had fallen into sin. We can bear one another's burdens by helping another to do right. If you would be a real help to others, you must realize your own weakness and liability to do wrong.

### **"Let Each Man Prove His Own Work" (Verses 3-5)**

There is not much to a man who wants people to think he is great. Strip Some men of their pretense, their boastfulness, their egotism, and there would not be much left; such men deceive themselves, and frequently they deceived others. Too many people are carried away by outward appearances. Every man should prove, or test, his

own manner of living. He has the example of Jesus and the teaching of the apostles by which to measure his deeds. He should be honest with himself in such a test. If then his work passes the test and stands approved by his own moral judgment, he then can "have his glorying in regard of himself alone, and not of his neighbor." It is a high degree of satisfaction to a person to have an approving conscience because he has done what he knows to be right. No matter how much help we receive from others, every one must live his own life, he must bear his own burden.

### **Sowing to the Flesh or Spirit (Verses 6-8)**

The one who is being taught should remunerate his teacher. More literal and exact: Let the one being taught the word contribute to the one teaching. That is a just arrangement. Make contributions of all good things. Paul preached the gospel at Corinth, and then wrote them: "If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things?" (1 Cor. 9:11.) "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." That is a universal law; God made it so at the beginning, and he has never been mocked by the failure of that law. Its special application here is in the matter of contributing material things to the one who teaches spiritual things. That goes against the grain of some, and it is sometimes inconvenient for any of us to do so, but it must be done. God has so ordered it; and if we think we can shirk that duty and still reap spiritual blessings—still be an approved servant of God, we deceive ourselves. A deceived person is blind to results; but his blindness does not reverse the law of sowing and reaping. It does not relieve a person of the consequences of his sowing to be deceived as to results. "He that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption," no matter what he thinks about it. If a man refuses to contribute to the one who speaks to him the word of God and spends his money for his own satisfaction, pride, or pleasure, he is sowing to the flesh. The connection shows that this is the special point Paul had in mind. Paul states a universal law, as applicable in the way we spend our money. We all know this universal law is true in material things. If it were not true, no farmer or gardener would know how to proceed. You can no more mock God in spiritual matters than you can by growing corn from planting beans; it just does not work that way. If you sow a certain seed by mistake, the harvest will be according to the seed you sow, and not according to your intentions. You were honest in what you did? Yes; but you sowed honest seed, and it produced an honest harvest—that is what counts.

Paul mentions two kinds of sowing—to the flesh, and to the Spirit. By using the capital S the translators show that they understood Paul to mean the Holy Spirit. The flesh has its needs, as well as its excessive desires and passions. It is proper and right to supply the need of the flesh. A man can sow to the flesh without indulging in moral corruption and degradation; he can sow to the flesh by spending his money and time for pleasures, worldly amusements, and luxuries. The rich man of Luke 16:19-31 is an example of this manner of sowing to the flesh: "Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day." He spent his money freely for his own fleshly gratification, as many do today. He sowed to the flesh, though there is no



indication that he was a drunkard or an adulterer. Some methods of sowing to the flesh are more degrading than others, but the end of all of sowing to the flesh is decay and death. We cannot escape the law of sowing and reaping.

### **Be Not Weary in Well doing (Verses 9, 10)**

"And let us not be weary in well-doing." Well-doing—doing the right thing—is sowing to the Spirit; and the gain is eternal life. When we think of the rich harvest that comes of sowing to the Spirit, why should we grow weary or faint by the way? Think what Jesus did for us, and what Paul suffered that the gospel might fully be made known. Jesus did not complain of his hard lot, and Paul never had any thought of giving up or fainting by the way. With him the reward far outweighed any suffering he was called on to endure. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward." (Rom. 8:18.) We should therefore busy ourselves in doing good to all men, as we have opportunity, and especially should we do what good we can to our fellow Christians. It is 'sometimes difficult to know what course to follow in order to do good to some people. To give material aid to a person in such way as to encourage idleness is not doing good to him. It is sometimes difficult to know whether a rebuke, or an exhortation, will do the most good. All things should be done wisely and freely.

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

We may for a time ignore the fundamental law of sowing and reaping, but we cannot change it, nor evade its inevitable consequences. As is the sowing, so will be the reaping; "for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." You cannot mock God by making it otherwise. You cannot sow to the flesh and to the Spirit at the same time. You alone must make the choice between the two. If you do not choose to sow to the Spirit, you automatically choose to sow to the flesh. "Be not deceived."

### **TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION**

Being overtaken in a trespass, or deliberate choosing a life of sin.  
The law of sowing and reaping as applied to Christian living.  
Doing good to all men, and especially to Christians.

### **QUESTIONS**

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

#### **Lesson Settings**

Give time, place, and persons.  
Give evidence that Paul planted the churches in Galatia.  
Why did he have to defend his apostleship?  
What did he teach the Galatians about the law of Moses?

#### **Verses 22, 25**

Give the list of the works of the flesh given in verses 19.21.  
Name the characteristics Paul gives of the fruit of

#### **Verses 24-26**

What is meant by crucifying the flesh?  
Discuss verses 25 and 26.

#### **Gal. 6:1, 2**

Read and discuss verse 1.  
How bear one another's burdens?

#### **Verses 3-5**

What is said of the man who thinks he is something?  
Why are people so easily deceived by a noisy egotist?  
How should a man measure himself?

**Verses 6-8**

Read and discuss verse 6.

What has that to do with sowing and reaping?

"God is not mocked." what does that mean?

Why do good intentions not always produce good reaping?

In what ways may people sow go the flesh?

**Verses 9, 10**

Discuss verse 9.

Discuss verse 10.

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson XIII—December 24, 1944

**THE GROUND OF UNIVERSAL JOY**

Luke 2:8-12; Heb. 1:1-4; 1 John 1:1-4

8 And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock.

9 And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them. Be not afraid: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people:

11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.

12 And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger."

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.

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.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people." (Luke 2:10.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.* Isa. 55:1-13.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*

December 18. M

December 19. T

December 20. W

December 21. T

December 22. F

December 23. S

December 24. S

The Savior Born (Luke 2:8-12)

God Revealed in Christ (Heb. 1:1-4)

Joy in Knowing Christ (1 John 1:1-4)

Joy in God's Strength (Psalm 71:17-24)

Joy in God's House (Psalm 132:1-10)

The Wise Men Rejoice (Matt. 2:1-10)

Joy Unspeakable (1 Pet. 1:3-9)

**LESSON SETTINGS**

*Time.* The year in which Jesus was born is usually understood to have been four years earlier than our common count gives it. The Hebrew letter was probably written A.D. 64 or 65. It is sup-

posed that John's first letter was written near the close of the first century, but even that is not certain.

*Place.*—Jerusalem, but where Hebrews and First John were written is not known.

*Persons.*—Some shepherds, an angel, the writer of Hebrews, Hebrew Christians, the apostle John, and the people to whom he wrote.

*Lesson Links.*—God works according to his own plans and purposes—"when the fulness of the time came God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. 4:4, 5.) Through Abraham's seed God promised to bless the world, and Paul tells us that the promised seed was Christ Jesus. (Gen. 22:15-18; Gal. 3:8, 16.) To Moses Jehovah said, "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. 18:18, 19.) Prophecies too numerous to quote, or even to mention, in this limited space, foretold the coming of the Messiah. Here are some of the striking prophecies: Isa. 7:14; 9:6, 7; 53:1-12; Micah 5:2. The prophecies had created great expectations in the minds of the Jews, and in the minds of some people in other nations. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, was also a subject of prophecy. (Luke 3:1-6.)

A decree had gone out from the emperor of Rome that all the world should be enrolled; this was for the purpose of taxation. (Luke 2:1, 2.) Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth, but they were of Bethany by inheritance. It was the custom for Jews to enroll by tribes and families, each in the City of his inheritance. This required that Joseph and Mary go from Nazareth to Bethlehem, a long journey at a critical time for Mary. All the rooms in the inn were occupied when they arrived. "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?" (Verses 6, 7.) They were not denied a room in the inn because of any antagonism toward them, and certainly not against the unborn infant. Lodging in the place where animals were fed and sheltered did not then seem so bad as to us of the present time.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### The Shepherds (Verse 8)

These shepherds were staying with their flocks; it seems that they had no available sheepfolds. They kept watch by night over their flocks; or, as in the margin, they kept "night-watches" over their flocks. They would take turns in guarding the sheep from animals and thieves. The hills in the Bethlehem section had furnished pasturage for ages. Here David cared for his father's sheep. Adam Clarke says, "It was a custom among the Jews to send out their sheep to the deserts, about the passover, and bring them home at the commencement of the first rain: during the time they were out, the

shepherds watched them night and day." Jesus was therefore born sometime between the passover season and the fall rainy season. December 25 does not therefore come anywhere near being the date of his birth.

### **Shepherds Visited by an Angel (Verses 9-12)**

Jesus came into the world to be the Savior of men, and to be King of kings, and Lord of lords. No one else has ever been so highly exalted; yet he was born in a stable, cradled in a manger, and his birth was first announced to lowly shepherds as they watched their flocks. No human wisdom would have thought of such a way of ushering into the world one whose name was to be above all other names. If a man had been going to write a story for the purpose of deceiving people into thinking it was real history, he never would have thought of such a lowly beginning for one who was to be exalted above all others. While shepherds were peacefully watching their flocks, "an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid." It seems impossible for men to remain composed and calm in the presence of a heavenly being. The glory of the Lord lighted up the place where they were; but what the angel said to them gave them light of another kind, and of great importance. This angel had come to deliver to them a message which the people of all nations should have been glad to hear. "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people." The angel would first quiet their fears. He had not come to bring any judgments on them; there was cause for rejoicing instead of fear—a Savior had been born. But the salvation Jesus would bring was not what the Jews expected. They longed for national deliverance from the power of the Romans; and they had their minds made up, that the Messiah, when he came, would give them the desired deliverance. It is easy for people to fix up a theory to suit what they want. And they thought the Messiah would be a Jewish Messiah, and not a world Savior to all alike. An angel had announced that the child to be born would save the people from their sins; nothing was said about saving the Jews from the Romans. The city of David was Bethlehem; it was so called because David was from that city. This should not be confused with that part of Jerusalem which was named the City of David, because David had taken it from the Jebusites.

"And this is the sign unto you." They had to have some sign by which they would know that they had found the right babe and not some other. It would also be a sign to them that the angel had told them the truth. There was nothing miraculous about a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger; but it did take divine power to know how he would be clothed and where he would be found. The shepherds would certainly know when they had found the babe of whom the angel spoke. The student should be sure to read verses 13-20; without these verses the lesson is not complete. These lowly shepherds were to be honored yet more; for "suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying," as if singing a refrain to the first angel's announcement, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased." The angels then departed. Man would have made important announcements to men in high

places, but God made that wonderful announcement to obscure shepherds. These lowly men heard such a message and such singing as none others had ever heard. The shepherds lost no time in going to see this newborn babe. Eagerly they told what the angels had said. "And all that heard it wondered at the things which were spoken unto them by the shepherds." The shepherds then returned to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen.

### **God Speaks to Us Through His Son (Heb. 1:1, 2)**

A clear distinction is here made between "the fathers" and "us," and between God's way of speaking to them and us. Moses the lawgiver stands pre-eminent among the prophets through whom God spoke to the fathers. The "divers portions" refers to the piecemeal revelations made by the prophets during the centuries before Christ. "Divers manners"—he spoke by types and figures, by visions and dreams, and by plain speech. "At the end of these days"—in the end of the days in which God spoke to the fathers by the prophets. That period had ended. 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.) If therefore you want to read what God said to the fathers, read the Old Testament. "Heir of all things," as the only begotten Son. We are heirs through him. "Through whom also he made the worlds." The Son was the active agent through whom the Father created all things. The same truth is set forth in such passages as John 1:3, 10; Col. 1:16, 17. We can therefore see the significance of the plural pronoun in Gen. 1:26. God did not just speak the world 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 the showing forth, of the Father's glory. "And the very image of his substance," "who is the image of the invisible God." (Col. 1:15.) 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 things. He upholds all things by the word of his power. Neither prophets nor angels could do that. "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, not a priest until after the law ended at the cross. (Heb. 7:28; 8:4.) 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.) He is now prophet, priest, and king, as well as Savior. This puts him above all angels, and gives him a name more excellent than theirs. "God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name." (Read Phil. 2:8-11.)

**"We Have Seen, and Bear Witness" (1 John 1:1-4)**

It seems plain that John included the other apostles in the experiences mentioned in these verses; and this fact causes one to wonder if John wrote this letter while the other apostles were still living. 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-fleshly states of Christ. The apostles had so fully known Christ, that they could not have been mistaken as to his identity. They had seen him with their own eyes, had heard him with their own ears, and had handled him—touched him. He was as real as any other person, both before his crucifixion and after his resurrection. They were therefore competent witnesses. He is the Word of life—in him is life. (John 1:4.) Life, self-existent, inherent, is in him. Their purpose in declaring what they had seen and heard is clearly stated: "that ye also may have fellowship with us." "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.) That faith puts us into fellowship with the apostles, and also with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And in leading his readers into such full fellowship would make his joy full. "Greater joy have I none than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth." (3 John 4.)

**SOME REFLECTIONS**

It seems to be certain that Jesus was not born on any day in December. But nothing could be less appropriate than the way people celebrate the supposed birthday of Jesus.

An angel is a messenger, for so the word means. To us God's messengers, heavenly messengers, are mysterious beings; and yet they have played an important part in all of God's plans, and in his dealings with men. They brought messages to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, to Moses, and to many other men. An angel foretold the birth of Jesus; an angel announced his birth; at his birth a multitude sang praises to God; an angel told Joseph to flee to Egypt with the babe; an angel directed him to return to Judaea; angels appear to Jesus in Gethsemane; and they were present at his resurrection and ascension. Yet to us they are mysteries.

**TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION**

Why Jesus came to earth.  
Why the Bible was written.

**QUESTIONS**

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

**Lesson Settings**

Give time, place, and persons.  
Discuss Gal. 4:4, 5.  
Discuss what God said to Moses about a prophet like Moses.  
Give some of the prophecies concerning a Savior.

Tell about the birth of Jesus.

**Verse 8**

Tell about shepherding in Palestine.

**Verses 9-12**

What shows that man did not invent the story of the birth of Jesus?

Discuss the angel's visit to the shepherds.

Tell about the multitude of angels.

**Heb. 1:1, 2**

What distinctions does the writer make in verses 1, 2.

Show how God speaks to us.

Discuss the phrase, "through whom also he made the worlds."

**Verses 3, 4**

Discuss verse 3.

Why was not Christ a priest on earth?

Why was the writer showing his superiority over

angels?

**1 John 1:1-4**

What shows that John here included the other apostles?

What shows that the apostles were competent witnesses of Christ?

What was their purpose in bearing witness of him?

Quote John 20:30, 31.

Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson XIV—December 31, 1944

**THE BASIS OF COURAGE FOR THE FUTURE**

Matt. 16:13-20; 2 Pet. 3:14-18; 1 John 3:1-3

13 Now when Jesus came into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of man is?

14 And they said, Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am?

16 And Simon peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven.

18 And I also say unto thee. that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

19 I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven' and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

20 Then charged he the disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ.

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

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

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

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

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

1 Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

2 Beloved, now are we children of God. and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that. if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is.

3 And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

*GOLDEN TEXT.*—"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58.)

*DEVOTIONAL READING.*—Rev. 5:8-14.

*DAILY BIBLE READINGS.*—

December 25. M

December 26. T

Built on the Rock (Matt. 16:13-20)

Growing in Grace (2 Pet. 3:14-18)

December 27. W	"We Shall Be Like Him" (1 John 3:1-6)
December 28. T	Growing Up in Christ (Eph, 4:11-16)
December 29. F	Changed by the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:7-9, 17, 18)
December 30. S	Sealed Unto Redemption (Eph. 1:3-13)
December 31. S	Paul's Triumphant Hope (2 Tim. 4:6-8)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—For Matt. 16:13-20, probably A.D. 30; for 2 Pet. 3:14-18, probably within the years A.D. 65 to 68; for John 3:1-3, date uncertain.

*Place.*—Near Caesarea Philippi; where Peter and John wrote is not known.

*Persons.*—Jesus, his apostles, Christians in general.

*Lesson Links.*—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote their records to acquaint us with the person, life, teaching, character, and mission of the Lord Jesus Christ. To know him is to love him, and to love him is to be willing to serve him. "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. Judas (not Iscariot) saith unto him, Lord, what is come to pass that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John 14:21-23.) Hence there are two classes of people—those who love the Lord, and therefore keep his commandments; and those who do not love him, and therefore do not keep his commandments. The letters to churches and to individuals were written that Christians might be thoroughly grounded in the faith, and that they might know how to behave in the family of God.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Opinions of the People Concerning Jesus (Verses 13, 14)

The teaching and the miracles of Jesus had so stirred the people that even his enemies could not dismiss him with a shrug of the shoulders. People were either for him or against him; they could not be indifferent. Many who thought favorably of him had no just conceptions concerning him or his mission. It seems that Jesus made this journey up into the regions of Caesarea Philippi to get away from the growing bitterness, so as to have a period of quietness in which to give his disciples some needed lessons. Jesus came into the world to save sinners, but he could not do so unless they had the right attitude toward him. He could not therefore be indifferent as to what people thought about him. It was especially important that his apostles had formed a fixed idea as to who he was. To lead them up to a definite confession of their faith in him, he first inquired of them, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" Herod and some others thought he was John the Baptist risen from the dead. (Matt. 14:1, 2; Luke 9:7.) Others thought he was Elijah, or Jeremiah, or some other of the prophets. They had merely formed and expressed opinions about Jesus. They knew that he was no ordinary man, but they did not believe that he was the Son of God. Their expressions compared with the confession of Peter illustrates the difference between opinion and faith.



**Faith Confessed (Verses 15, 16)**

Jesus had been training the apostles for the great work of preaching the gospel to the whole world. His work had failed if they had no higher conception of him than the masses of the people. A favorable opinion of him was not sufficient; they must have an unwavering faith in him as the Christ, the Son of the living God. He would test them with a question: "But who say ye that I am?" Peter answered for all: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." That was an intelligent expression of faith, not of a mere opinion. These disciples had seen his mighty works, had heard his teachings and his claims, and they knew the goodness of his character. With open hearts they had weighed the evidence, and were fully persuaded that he was the Messiah; and they gladly confessed their faith in him. The truth that Peter confessed is the central truth of the Bible, the foundation on which the whole structure of Christianity rests. If Jesus be not the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Bible is a meaningless book, the Christianity a huge and baseless fabrication. Jesus is the Son of God in a special sense. He in his own person is the Christ, the long-expected Messiah. If, as some say, the Christ is not in the person of Jesus, the Son of God, but is made up of Jesus and the church, then Peter did not confess the whole truth.

**"I Will Build My Church" (Verses 17, 18)**

While the Messiah had to come of the seed of Abraham, through the tribe of Judah, and the family of David, the fact that Jesus came in that way did not prove that he was the Christ, the Son of God, for many others had the same fleshly connection. There was need that God point him out, or reveal him, as the Christ; this had been done in several ways. God had said at his baptism, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." John and all present had heard that voice. God had told John how he would know when he had baptized the Christ. John told the people about this, and added, "And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." (John 1:29-34.) The mighty miracles and signs God did by him had been further testimony that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. In these ways and by these means God had revealed to Peter and the other disciples that Jesus was the Christ. And that great truth—that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, is the foundation on which Jesus said he would build his church. It is the only foundation on which a church of Jesus Christ can be built. "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 3:11.) That great truth is the foundation of the church, the foundation of all our hopes. Hence the church was not built on Peter.

The church had certainly not been built when Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church." It could not therefore have been built in the days of Abraham, nor even in the days of John the Baptist. The church could not be built until the foundation was laid; preaching Christ is laying the foundation. (1 Cor. 3:10, 11.) They were not yet allowed to preach Jesus as the Christ. (Matt. 16:20.) The foundation was first laid in Jerusalem when Peter first declared that Jesus had been made both Lord and Christ. (Acts 2:33-36.) There and then the church had its beginning. Against this church the gates of Hades would not prevail—never prevail against its

foundation, nor its being built, nor its continuance. To prevail at either point would be the destruction of the church, and that would never be.

### **Keys of the Kingdom (Verses 19, 20)**

Keys are a symbol of authority. Keys were not given to Peter to enable him to open and to lock doors; they represent the authority of the apostles to bind and to loose, as the language clearly shows: "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Nothing in this resembles the locking and the unlocking of doors. The same authority was given all the apostles. (John 20:23.) Paul, though called much later, had as much authority as any other apostle. "For I reckon that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles." (2 Cor. 11:5.) "For in nothing was I behind the very chiefest apostles." (2 Cor. 12:11.) And in and of themselves they had no power or authority. It was the Holy Spirit speaking through them that made their words authoritative. (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:4-8; 2:4.) Hence they, as inspired apostles, spoke with authority on all matters pertaining to the scheme of redemption. But they were not yet allowed to announce Jesus as the Christ; the time had not come for that announcement. "Then charged he the disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ." That truth would be first announced when the Holy Spirit came upon them.

### **Exhortation to Peace and Steadfastness (2 Pet. 3:14-18)**

The exhortation grew out of what had just been said. (Read verses 1-13.) We look for the things mentioned in the preceding verses, especially that which is mentioned in verse 13. In the Bible great emphasis is put on diligence—"give diligence that ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in his sight," when the day of God comes. Nothing else will be of any value when that day comes. We must live clean and honest lives; we cannot know when the day of God will come. God is long-suffering; one day with him is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. "And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation." Long-suffering is bearing with patience the offenses of others. If the Lord were not long-suffering, if he cut us down at our first offense, none would be saved.

It may be that Peter wrote his second letter after the death of Paul; at least, the expression, "all his epistles," shows that many of his letters had been written at the time Peter wrote this letter. The wisdom given to Paul was his inspiration. In reading Paul's writings we have all met the difficulty Peter mentions—"wherein are some things hard to be understood." These things that are hard to understand are the passages relied upon by some to support various wild theories, the passages "which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." 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." Some therefore torture the scriptures, not to get the truth out of them, but to make them say what they want them to say. God answers people according to what they have in their own hearts. (Ezek. 14:1-11; 2 Thess. 2:10-12.) How often passages in Paul's writings have been wrested in trying to make them teach

that a sinner does not have to do anything to be saved, thus causing people to disobey God and bringing destruction on themselves and those they mislead! And how often the prophecies have been wrested from the use New Testament writers make of them in an effort to make them teach some useless and hurtful theory! Many unsteadfast souls have been led entirely away from the church of God by such uses of the prophecies and Paul's writings. And so the things God gave us for our salvation, some have used to their own destruction.

### **"We Shall Be Like Him" (1 John 3:1-3)**

"Behold what manner of love." No words can fully reveal to us the great love God has bestowed on us; it is wonderful that he has made it possible for us to be Children of God. God's love gave us the Savior and made it possible for us to become children of God through him. The person who is saved from his sins is thereby a child of God. The greatness of God's love and the manner in which it was manifested is beyond our comprehension; by it enemies of God were, and are, transformed into the children of God. "And such we are." But the world does not recognize us as such—it does not know us. The world did not know Jesus—did not recognize him as the Son of God and the Savior of man. Though we are now the children of God, "it is not yet made manifest what we shall be"; what we shall be has not yet been presented to our view. But when he shall be manifested, we shall be like him—certainly not like him in every respect, but like him in purity and holiness. That transformation of character must begin here; for "every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Here we must live clean lives, else we shall never see him as he really is. Sinners saw Jesus while he was here on earth, but they did not see him as he was—did not see him as the Son of God and the Savior of man. At the judgment they shall see him, but they will not see him as he is; they will then be as blind to his real character as when he was here. "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit." (2 Cor. 3:18.)

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 3:18.) So long as a person is growing in Christian character, he has courage for greater efforts. To grow in grace is to grow in favor with God. To grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is to learn more and more of him. Without this growing in knowledge concerning him, we cannot grow in favor with God. To remain ignorant is to be displeasing to God. (Heb. 5:12.)

### **TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION**

When the church was established.  
The sin of wresting the scriptures.  
The need for Bible study.

**QUESTIONS**

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

**Lesson Settings**

Give time, place, and persons.

Give the purpose of the gospel records of the four writers.

What is it to love the Lord?

**Verses 13, 14**

What opinions had been expressed about who Jesus was?

What illustrates the difference between opinions and faith?

**Verses 15, 16**

For what had Jesus been training his apostles?

Why was faith, not opinions, needed?

In what ways had God revealed to the apostles that Jesus was the Christ?

**Verses 17, 18**

What is the foundation truth of Christianity?

What is the foundation of the church?

When was the foundation first laid, and how laid?

**Verses 19, 20**

What did keys signify?

What shows that Paul was equal to the other apostles?

What enabled them to speak with authority?

**2 Pet. 3:14-18**

Discuss verse 14.

What does Peter say about the ignorant and unsteadfast?

Give meaning of long-suffering.

What of those who wrest the scriptures?

**1 John 3:1-3**

What is said of God's love?

In what sense does the world not know the children of God?

What shall we be, and when?

Discuss verse 3.

Discuss the reflections.