GOSPEL ADVOCATE SERIES

Teacher's Annual Lesson Commentary

ON

UNIFORM BIBLE LESSONS

FOR THE

CHURCHES OF CHRIST

1948

This commentary is based on the Uniform Bible Lessons for the churches of Christ, and is the fourth year of the new series of the seven-year cycle, 1945-1951

TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL VOLUME

PRICE

Single copy, postpaid ..... 95 cents
Five or more copies to same address, each, net ..... 85 cents

ORDER FROM

GOSPEL ADVOCATE COMPANY
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

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PREFACE

This is the third volume of TEACHER'S ANNUAL LESSON COMMENTARY, though it is the twenty-seventh annual volume published by the Gospel Advocate Company on Bible School Lessons.

This volume for 1948 is devoted to a study of the rise, growth, fall, and restoration of the kingdom of Israel. The aims of this course of study are to learn what God had to do in the affairs of Israel; to learn the laws through which he governed Israel; to learn the folly of disobedience to those laws; and to see that God's ways are right, and that genuine happiness is found only by walking in his ways.

An effort has been made to make this volume serve a twofold purpose. First, the needs of teachers have been kept in mind. Material for which the various quarterlies do not have the space has been given, and some suggestions have been made as to the lessons to be emphasized in the various departments, along with the lessons given in the quarterlies placed in the hands of the students. Next, the book has been written to serve as a text book for adult classes, which purpose it has been serving ever since the first volume was written by Brother E. A. Elam.

Quotations from standard works will be found, and much care has been taken to preserve the exact language of all authors quoted. H. B. Hackett's edition of Smith's Bible Dictionary, a work of four volumes, has been used in compiling the BIBLE DICTIONARY OF PROPER NAMES.

The author wishes that both teachers and students will find the material in this volume helpful, that it will stimulate them to further study of the Bible and of conservative standard works in their search for information on the subjects treated. He further wishes them the prosperity of 3 John 2.

THE AUTHOR.

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BIBLE DICTIONARY OF PROPER NAMES

Compiled by ROY H. LANIER

A

Aar-on (enlightened), Ex. 4: 14. Brother of Moses, and first high priest.
Ab-a-rim, Num. 27: 12. A mountain range in Moab, including Mt. Nebo.
A-bi-a-thar (the great one is Father), 1 Kings 2: 35. High priest in the time of David, and the eleventh from Aaron.
A-bib (sprouting), Ex. 13: 4. First month of the sacred, seventh of the civil, year of the Hebrew calendar; our April.
A-bi-hu (he is Father), Lev. 10: 1. Second son of Aaron; died because he offered strange fire before the Lord.
A-bi-jam, or **A-bi-jah** (will of Jehovah), 1 Kings 14: 31. Second king of Judah.
A-bim-e-lech (father of the king), Gen. 26: 8. King of the Philistines in the time of Isaac.
Abi-ram (father exalted), Num. 16. A Reubenite who joined Korah in rebellion.
Ab-i-shag (father of error, misdeed), 1 Kings 1: 15. A young Shunammite in David's harem whom Adonijah wanted for wife.
A-bra-ham or **A-bram** (father of a multitude, exalted father), Gen. 12: 1. Founder of the Hebrew people, and father of the faithful.
Ab-sa-lom (father of peace), 2 Sam. 15: 7-9. Only son of David by Maacah, a Gentile woman.
Ach-me-tha or **Ecbatana**, Ezra 6: 2. Summer home of Darius, in northern Persia.
Ad-o-ni-jah (my Lord is Jehovah), 1 Kings 2: 28. Fourth son of David who tried to get the throne before Solomon was anointed.
A-do-ram (Lord of exaltation), 1 Kings 12: 18. An officer under Rehoboam.
A-hab (father's brother), 1 Kings 18: 1. Seventh king of Israel.
A-has-u-e-rus (king), Esther 1. King of Persia; Xerxes of profane history.
A-ha-va (water), Ezra 8: 21. A place where Ezra gathered his people to start for Jerusalem.
A-haz (possessor), 2 Kings 16: 1. Eleventh king of Judah.
A-ha-zi-ah (whom Jehovah sustains), 1. Eighth king of Israel, 2 Chron. 20: 35. 2. Sixth king of Judah, and a nephew of the king of Israel, 2 Chron. 22: 9.
A-hi-jah (friend of Jehovah), 2 Chron. 9: 29. A prophet of Shiloh in the time of Solomon.
Al-lon-bac-uth (the oak of weeping), Gen. 35: 8. The place near Bethel where Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, was buried.
Am-a-lek-ites, 1 Sam. 15: 6. A nomadic tribe in the peninsula of Sinai between Egypt and Palestine.
Am-a-zi-ah (strength of Jehovah), 2 Kings 14: 1. Ninth king of Judah.
Am-mon-ites, 1 Kings 11: 5. Lot's decendants by his younger daughter.
A-mon (multitude), 2 Kings 21: 19. Fifteenth king of Judah, son of Manasseh.
An-ti-och of Pi-sid-i-a, Acts 13: 14. A city where Paul established a church on his first missionary journey.
Ar-a-bah (burnt up, or waste), Deut. 1: 1. The deep valley through which the Jordan flows, extending a few miles south of the Dead Sea.
A-ri-el (lion of God), Isa. 29: 1; Ezra 8: 16. A chief director of the caravan under Ezra.
Ar-pachs-had (stronghold of the Chaldees), Gen. 10: 22. Son of Shem, and ancestor of Eber.
Ar-tax-erx-es (the great warrior), 1. King of Persia, mentioned in Ezra 4: 7. 2. Another king of Persia, Artaxerxes Longimanus, son of Xerxes, Neh. 2: 1.
A-sa (physician), 2 Chron. 15: 8. Third king of Judah, son of Abijah.
A-saph (collector), 1. Chief of the Levites in the time of David, and a writer of psalms. 1 Chron. 16: 5. 2. The keeper of the king's forest, Neh. 2: 8.
Ash-dod-ites (stronghold), Neh. 4: 7. The inhabitants of Ashdod, also called Azotus.
Ash-er (happy), Gen. 35: 26. Eighth son of Jacob, and second by Zilpah.
A-she-roth, Judges 3: 7. A Phoenician deity; perhaps the same as Ashtoreth, Asherah, Astarte.
As-syr-i-a 2 Kings 15: 19. A great country east of Palestine along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers; probably got its name from Asshur, son of Shem.
Ath-ens, Acts 17: 21. The capital of Attica, founded by Cecrops in 1556 B.C.
A-tone-ment, Lev. 16. A special day of offerings for sins on the tenth of Tsiri, typical of the death of Christ for the sins of the world.

B

Ba-al (Ba-al-im, plural), (master, possessor), 1 Kings 18: 21. God of the Phoenicians.
Ba-a-sha (he who seeks), 1 Kings 16: 17. Third king of Israel.

Bab-y-lon (confusion), 2 Kings 24: 10. Capital of Chaldea; place of captivity of Judah for seventy years.
Ba-rak (lightning), Judges 5: 1. Leader of Israel's army under Deborah.
Be-el-ze-bub (lord of the dwelling), Mark 3: 22. A heathen deity to whom the Jews ascribed the sovereignty of the evil spirits.
Be-er-she-ba (well of the oath), Gen. 26: 23. Name of a city in Judah; also name of a well.
Bel, Isa. 46: 1. The Babylonian name for Baal.
Bel-shaz-zar, Dan. 5: 1. The last king of Babylon.
Bel-te-shaz-zar (the prince of Bel), Dan. 1: 7. The Babylonian name for Daniel.
Ben-ja-min (son of the right hand), Gen. 35: 24. Twelfth son of Jacob, and second by Rachel.
Beth-el (house of God), Gen. 13: 3. City twelve miles north of Jerusalem.
Beth-she-mesh (house of the sun), 1 Sam. 6: 9. A town near the north boundary of Judah.
Be-zer (ore), Josh. 20: 8. A city of refuge east of the Jordan.
Bil-hah (bashfulness), Gen. 35: 25. Rachel's handmaid, who bore Dan and Naphtali.
Boz-rah (fold), Jer. 49: 13. A city of Esau in the mountains of Idumaea.

C

Cain (to acquire), Gen. 4: 1. First son of Adam, and first murderer.
Ca-leb (bold), Josh. 15: 17. Son of Jephunneh, and a faithful spy.
Ca-naan (low, flat), Gen. 10: 6. Home of the Jews after deliverance from bondage.
Ca-naan-ite, Gen. 12: 6. Inhabitants of the land when Abraham was promised the land.
Carmel, Mount (the park), 1 Kings 18: 19. A mountain in western Palestine.
Chal-de-ans, Dan. 5: 7. People of Chaldea. Also a class of wise men in Babylon.
Chis-lev, Zech. 7: 1. Ninth month of sacred, third of civil, calendar of Jews.
City of palm trees, Judges 3: 7. A place near Jericho.
Cushan-rish-a-tha-im, Judges 3: 8. King of Mesopotamia, and first oppressor of the Jews after they settled in Canaan.
Cy-rus (the sun), Dan. 1: 21. Founder of the Persian empire.

D

Da-mas-cus (activity, industry), Gen. 14: 15. Most ancient city of Syria; 133 miles northeast of Jerusalem.
Dan (judge), Gen. 35: 25. Fifth son of Jacob, and the first by Bilhah. Also name of one of the tribes of Israel.
Dan-iel (God is judge), Dan. 1: 6. A captive and officer of high rank in Babylon, and the fourth of the major prophets.
Da-ri-us (the restrainer), Dan. 6: 1. Name of several kings of Media and Persia.
Da-than (fountain), Num. 16: 1. Korah's companion in rebellion.
Da-vid (beloved), 1 Sam. 16: 13. Youngest son of Jesse; second king of Israel.
Deb-o-rah (bee, wasp), Judges 5: 1. Name of a prophetess and judge. Also Rebekah's nurse.
Deu-ter-on-o-my (second writing of the law). Fifth book of the Bible written by Moses.
Dis-per-sion (scattered). A term applied to the Jews who did not return from captivity.
Di-za-hab (possessor of gold), Deut. 1: 1. A place in the Arabian desert.

E

E-ber (beyond), Gen. 10: 24. Son of Shelah, and father of Peleg.
E-der (a flock), Gen. 35: 21. A place where Jacob lived after the death of Rachel.
E-dom-ites (sons of the hairy), 2 Sam. 8: 14. Descendants of Esau.
Eg-lon (calf-like), Judges 3: 12. King of Moab, and oppressor of Israel.
E-gypt, Ex. 12: 41. The northeastern part of Africa. The nation which held Israel in bondage.
E-hud (union), Judges 3: 15. A left-handed son of Gera, a Benjamite, who delivered Israel from the oppression of Eglon, the Moabite.
E-lah (oak), 1 Kings 16: 8. Fourth king of Israel, son of Baasha.
E-le-a-zar (God's help), Num. 20: 35. Son of Aaron, and second high priest.
E-li (high), 1 Sam. 1: 9. High priest in the time of Samuel.
E-li-a-kim (whom God will establish), 2 Kings 23: 34. Eighteenth king of Judah, whose name was changed to Je-hoi-a-kim.

E-li-a-shib (whom God restores), Neh. 13: 4. High priest in time of Nehemiah.
E-li-jah (Jehovah is my God), 1 Kings 18. A prophet in the reign of Ahab.
E-lul (the gleaning month), Neh. 6: 15. Sixth month of the sacred, twelfth of the civil, year, answering to the last of August and first of September.
E-phra-im (double fruitfulness), Gen. 41: 52. Second son of Joseph.
Eph-rath (fruitful), Gen. 35: 16. The ancient name of Bethlehem-Judah.
E-sar-had-don, 2 Kings 19: 37. King of Assyria, son of Sennacherib.
E-sau (hairy), Gen. 37: 1. Son of Isaac; father of the Edomites.
Es-ther (star), Esther 2: 7. A captive Jewess, who became queen of Persia.
Eu-phras-tes (bursting, sweet), Josh. 1: 4. Largest, longest, most important river of western Asia.
E-ze-ki-el (God will strengthen), Ezek. 1: 3. A priest, and third of the major prophets.

F

First-born, Ex. 13: 13. The first son born to a family, who succeeded his father as head.
First-fruits, Ex. 22: 29. The first ripe fruits offered to Jehovah.

G

Ga-ash (earthquake), Judges 2: 9. A mountain in Ephraim, where Joshua was buried.
Gad (fortune), Gen. 35: 26. Seventh son of Jacob, whose mother was Zilpah.
Ged-a-li-ah (Jehovah is great), 2 Kings 25: 25. A governor appointed by Nebuchadnezzar over the few left in Judah.
Gen-tile (nations, foreigners). A Hebrew word including all except Jews.
Ge-rar (district, abode), Gen. 26: 6. A city of Abraham's sojourn.
Ger-i-zim (waste places), Deut. 11: 29. The mount where Samaritans worshiped.
Ger-shon (a stranger there), Ex. 6: 16. The first son of Levi.
Ger-shon-ites. Num. 3: 21. A division of Levites who took care of curtains, tent hangings, and veils of the tabernacle. (Num. 4: 22-26.)
Ge-shem (firmness), Neh. 2: 19. One of Nehemiah's adversaries.
Gib-e-ah (hill), 1 Sam. 10: 26. The home of Saul, king of Israel.
Gi-be-on (belonging to a hill), 1 Chron. 21: 9. Last known location of the tabernacle.
Gib-e-on-ites, Josh. 9: 3. Inhabitants of a Hivite city who made a covenant with Joshua by deceiving him.
Gid-e-on (a hewer, brave warrior), Judges 6. A judge and warrior in Israel.
Gil-gal (rolling), 1 Sam. 10: 8. A place west of the Jordan and north of Jericho.
Go-lan (circle, region), Josh. 20: 8. A city of refuge in Bashan, in the tribe of Manasseh, east of the Jordan.
Go-shen, Gen. 45: 10. The district of Egypt where the Jews dwelt.

H

Had-ad-e-zer or Had-ar-ez-er (whose help is Hadah), 2 Sam. 8: 5. King of Zobah defeated by David.
Ha-gar (flight), Gen. 16: 1. Sarah's handmaid: Abraham's concubine; Ishmael's mother.
Hag-gai (festive), Ezra 5: 1. A prophet and associate of Ezra and Nehemiah.
Ha-man (celebrated), Esther 3: 1. Chief minister or vizier of king Ahasuerus.
Ha-math (fortress), 1 Kings 4: 21. The principal city of Upper Syria.
Ha-nan-el, Neh. 3: 1. A tower in the wall of Jerusalem.
Ha-na-ni (gracious), Neh. 7: 1. A brother of Nehemiah.
Han-a-ni-ah (Jehovah is gracious), Jer. 28: 1. A prophet who opposed Jeremiah.
Han-nah (grace), 1 Sam. 1: 2. The mother of the prophet Samuel.
Ha-ran (scorched). 1. A place where Abraham stopped in his journey to Canaan. 2. The son of Terah and brother of Abraham. Gen. 11: 27.
Ha-ze-roth (camping grounds), Deut. 1: 1. A place where the Israelites camped in the desert.
He-brew (belonging to Eber), Jer. 34: 9. A name given Abraham and his descendants.
He-bron (union), Josh. 20: 7. A city of refuge west of the Jordan.
He-man (true, reliable), 1 Chron. 25: 1. One in charge of the praise service under David.
Hez-e-ki-ah (strength of Jehovah), 2 Kings 18: 1. Thirteenth king of Judah.
Hil-ki-ah (Jehovah is my portion), 2 Kings 22: 8. A high priest during the reign of Josiah.

Hi-ram (noble born), 1 Kings 9: 11. The king of Tyre, who helped Solomon build the temple.
Hit-tites, Josh. 1: 4. A nation of Canaan; descendants of Heth.
Ho-bab (beloved), Num. 10: 29. Son of Reuel, a Midianite.
Ho-reb (dry waste), Ex. 3: 1. Name of a district near Mt. Sinai.
Ho-she-a (God is help), 2 Kings 15: 30. The last king of Israel.
Hul-dah (weasel), 2 Kings 22: 14. A prophetess in the time of Josiah, king of Judah.

I

I-saac (laughter), Gen. 26: 1. Son of Abraham by Sarah.
I-sa-iah (Jehovah is salvation), Isa. 1: 1. First of the major prophets.
Ish-ma-el (whom God hears), Gen. 16: 11. Son of Abraham by Hagar.
Ish-ma-el-ites, Gen. 37: 25. The descendants of Ishmael.
Is-ra-el, (he who striveth with God), Gen. 32: 28. Name given Jacob and his posterity.
Is-sa-char (there is a reward), Gen. 35: 23. Ninth son of Jacob, and fifth by Leah.
Ith-a-mar (land of palms), Num. 3: 2-4. The youngest son of Aaron.

J

Jab-bok (flowing), Gen. 32: 22. A stream in the mountain range of Gilead.
Ja-besh-Gil-e-ad (dry, parched), 1 Sam. 11: 1. The chief city of Gilead.
Ja-bin (intelligent), Judges 4: 3. King of Hazor, defeated by Barak.
Ja-cob (supplanter), Gen. 35: 1. Father of the twelve tribes of Jews.
Jad-dua (known), Neh. 12: 22. Last high priest mentioned in the Old Testament.
Ja-el (climber, wild goat), Judges 4: 17. Wife of Heber who slew Sisera.
Jec-o-ni-ah (Jehovah establishes), Jer. 27: 20. Nineteenth king of Judah.
Je-du-thun (he who praises), 1 Chron. 25: 3. One appointed by David to provide music.
Je-ho-a-haz (whom Jehovah holds), 1. Eleventh king of Israel, 2 Kings 13: 2. Seventeenth king of Judah, 2 Kings 23.
Je-hoi-a-chin (appointed of Jehovah), 2 Chron. 36: 9. Same as Je-co-ni-ah and Co-ni-ah.
Je-hoi-a-kim (Jehovah sets up), 2 Chron. 36: 5. Eighteenth king of Judah.
Je-ho-ram (exalted by Jehovah). 1. Fifth king of Judah, son of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. 21: 1. 2. Ninth king of Israel, son of Ahab, 2 Kings 8: 16.
Je-hosh-a-phat (Jehovah is judge), 1 Kings 15: 24. Fourth king of Judah.
Jer-e-miah (whom Jehovah exalts), Jer. 1: 1. The second of the major prophets.
Jer-i-cho (place of fragrance), Josh. 2: 1. First city of Canaan destroyed by Joshua.
Jer-o-bo-am (whose people is many), 1 Kings 11: 28. First king of the divided kingdom in Israel.
Je-ru-sa-lem (foundation of peace), Religious and political center of the Jews.
Jesh-u-a (Jehovah helps), Ezra 3: 2. A high priest and associate of Ezra.
Je-thro (preeminence), Ex. 4: 18. Priest of Midian, father-in-law of Moses.
Jo-ash (whom Jehovah gave), same as Je-ho-ash. 1. Eighth king of Judah 2. Kings 11: 2. 2. Twelfth king of Israel, 2 Kings 13: 10.
Jor-dan (the descender), Josh. 1: 2. The principal river in Palestine.
Jo-seph (increaser), Gen. 35: 24. Eleventh son of Jacob, and first by Rachel.
Josh-u-a (Jehovah is Saviour), Josh. 1: 1. Son of Nun, and successor of Moses.
Jo-si-ah (Jehovah heals), 2 Kings 2: 21. Son of Amon, and fifteenth king of Judah.
Jo-tham (Jehovah is upright), 2 Chron. 27: 1. Son of Uzziah, and eleventh king of Judah.
Ju-dah (praise), Gen. 35: 23. Fourth son of Jacob by Leah; name of one of the tribes of Israel; and name of the southern kingdom after the division.
Judges. Men who administered the affairs of Israel from Joshua to Saul, the first king.

K

Ka-desh, Ka-desh-Bar-ne-a (holy), Num. 20: 1. A city near the southern boundary of Canaan.
Ke-desh, Josh. 20: 9. A city of refuge west of the Jordan occupied by Gershonites.
Kir-i-ath-je-a-rim (city of the forests), 1 Sam. 6: 21. A place where the ark of the covenant was kept twenty years.

Ko-hath-ites, Num. 3: 27. Descendants of Kohath, second son of Levi; those Levites who took care of the sacred vessels and the ark of the covenant, Num. 4: 6; Deut. 31: 25.
Ko-rah (baldness), Num. 16: 1. Great-grandson of Levi, and one who rebelled against Moses.

L

La-ban (white). 1. A place where Israel camped in the desert, Deut. 1: 1. 2. The father of Leah and Rachel, and Jacob's father-in-law.
La-od-i-ce-a (justice of the people), Rev. 3: 14. City in the province of Phrygia.
Le-ah (wearied), Gen. 29: 17. Wife of Jacob and mother of six of his sons.
Leb-a-non (white), Josh. 1: 4. Two ranges of mountains about ninety miles long with a valley of five to eight miles wide between. The western range is the "Libanus," or Lebanon, where Solomon got his timber; the eastern range is called "Anti-Libanus," or Lebanon, towards the sun rising, Josh. 13: 5.
Le-vi (crown), Gen. 35: 23. Third son of Jacob by Leah, and father of the Levites.
Le-vites, The tribe from which all priests were selected, and who took care of the tabernacle and temple.
Lot (veil), Gen. 11: 27. Son of Haran; nephew of Abraham.

M

Mach-pe-lah (the portion), Gen. 23: 17. The cave where Abraham buried his dead.
Mal-a-chi (contraction of a word meaning "messenger of Jehovah"). The last of the prophets, and perhaps an associate of Nehemiah.
Mam-re (manliness). 1. An Amorite chief, Gen. 14: 13. 2. A city of Canaan, which was also called Hebron, Gen. 13: 18.
Ma-nas-seh (making to forget), Gen. 41: 51. First son of Joseph, and head of one tribe.
Mel-a-ti-ah (delivered by Jehovah), Neh. 3: 7. A Gibeonite who worked with Nehemiah.
Mel-chiz-e-dek (king of righteousness), Gen. 14: 18. King and priest of Salem in the time of Abraham.
Me-ra-ri (unhappy), Gen. 6: 19. Third son of Levi.
Me-ra-rites, Num. 3: 33. One division of Levites who took care of the heavy material in the tabernacle, Num. 7: 1-9.
Me-rom (height), Josh. 11: 5. A lake near the headwaters of the Jordan.
Mes-o-po-ta-mi-a (high land of two rivers), Acts 7: 2. A country east of Palestine, with Ur in the south, and Haran in the north.
Mi-di-an (strife), Ex. 2: 16. Son of Abraham by Keturah; also the name of a country.
Mid-i-an-ites, Judges 6: 33. Descendants of Abraham and Keturah who lived in the desert north of the Arabian peninsula, bordering the eastern frontier of Palestine.
Miz-pah (tower), 1 Sam. 10: 17. Where Saul was chosen to be first king of Israel.
Mor-de-cai (dedicated to Mars), Esther 5: 5. Cousin and foster father of Esther.
Mo-ses (drawn out), Ex. 3: 1. Prophet, lawgiver, and deliverer of Israel.
Mount Mo-ri-ah (Jehovah provides), Gen. 22: 2. Where Abraham offered Isaac.

N

Na-dab (noble), Lev. 10: 1. Eldest son of Aaron; died for offering strange fire.
Na-hash (serpent), 1 Sam. 11: 1. A brutal Ammonite king defeated by Saul.
Na-hor (slayer). 1. Grandfather of Abraham, Gen. 11: 22. 2. Brother of Abraham, Gen. 11: 26.
Naph-ta-li (wrestling), Gen. 35: 25. Sixth son of Jacob, whose mother was Bilhah.
Ne-bo (height), Deut. 32: 1. Mountain where Moses viewed Canaan, and died.
Neb-u-chad-nez-zar (may Nebo protect the crown), 2 Kings 24: 10. King of Babylon who took the kingdom of Judah into captivity.
Neb-u-zar-a-dan (Nebo gives prosperity), Jer. 39: 9. Captain of the guard under Nebuchadnezzar.
Ne-he-mi-ah (consoled by Jehovah), Neh. 1: 1. A prophet who rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem.
Ne-to-phah (distillation), Ezra 2: 22. A town near Bethlehem.
No-a-di-ah (whom Jehovah meets), Neh. 6: 14. A prophetess who helped Nehemiah's enemies.
No-ah (consolation), Gen. 6: 9. The second father of the race.
Nob (height), 1 Sam. 21: 1. A Levite city to which David fled.

O

Oph-rah (female fawn), Judges 6: 1. Gideon's home in the valley of Jezreel.
Oth-ni-el (lion of God), Josh. 15: 17. A judge and nephew of Caleb.

P

Pad-dan-a-ram (the table land of Aram), Gen. 28: 2. A section of country east of the Euphrates river, six hundred miles northwest of Ur, and north of Damascus.
Pal-es-tine (land of strangers). The word occurs four times in the Authorized Version, but not at all in the American Standard Version, which has Philistia. It is used to mean only a part of Canaan along the shore of the Mediterranean. But common usage today applies it to all the land of Canaan, the Holy Land.
Par-a-dise (orchard of pleasure). Place of rest for departed spirits of the righteous.
Passover, Ex. 23: 14-17. A Jewish feast to commemorate the sparing of the first-born of the Jews from the death angel in Egypt, held in Nisan, our April.
Pe-kah (open-eyed), 2 Kings 15: 30. Eighteenth king of Israel.
Pe-leg (stream, division), Gen. 10: 25. The son of Heber.
Pen-ta-teuch. The Greek name given the five books of Moses.
Pen-te-cost (fiftieth), Ex. 34: 22. A Jewish feast day fifty days after passover.
Pen-u-el (face of God), 1 Kings 12: 25. A place between the Jabbock and Succoth; called Pe-ni-el in Gen. 32: 30; fortified by Jeroboam.
Pha-raoh (sun), Ex. 1: 11. A title applied to rulers of Egypt.
Phi-lis-tines (immigrants), 1 Kings 4: 21. Inhabitants of Philistia.
Phoe-ni-ci-ans. People inhabiting a narrow strip of country running one hundred twenty miles along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea beginning at Mt. Carmel; Tyre and Sidon were the principal cities.
Pis-gah (the part, piece), Deut. 34: 1. A part of the mountain range of Abarim. Nebo was the top of Pisgah. The place where Moses viewed Canaan.
Pul, 2 Kings 15: 19. King of Assyria; same as Tig-lath-pi-les-er, 2 Kings 15: 29.

R

Ra-chel (ewe, sheep), Gen. 29: 9. Daughter of Laban, and wife of Jacob.
Ra-mah (the height), 1 Sam. 1: 19. The birthplace of Samuel.
Ra-moth (heights), Josh. 20: 8. A city of refuge in Gilead east of the Jordan.
Re-bek-ah (ensnarer), Gen. 24: 67. Sister of Laban, and wife of Isaac.
Red Sea, Ex. 15: 14. Sea between Egypt and Arabia crossed by the Israelites.
Re-ho-bo-am (enlarger of the people), 1 Kings 12: 1. Son of Solomon, and first king of the southern division, Judah.
Re-pha-iah (healed of Jehovah), Neh. 3: 9. One of the rulers of Jerusalem in the time of Nehemiah.
Re-u (friend), Gen. 11: 18. Son of Peleg in the line of Abraham's ancestors.
Reu-ben (see, a son), Gen. 35: 23. First son of Jacob by Leah.
Rib-lah (fertility), 2 Kings 25: 6. Headquarters of Nebuchadnezzar during the siege of Jerusalem.

S

Sa-ma-ri-a (watch mountain), 1 Kings 16: 24. A district of Canaan between Judaea and Galilee.
Sam-son (little sun), Judges 13. Judge of Israel, and strong man of the Bible.
Sam-u-el (asked of God), 1 Sam. 3: 1. Last judge of Israel, and great prophet.
San-bal-lat (giving strength to the army), Neh. 2: 10. A Horonite enemy of the Jews.
Sar-gon (prince of the sun), Isa. 20: 1. King of Assyria.
Sa-tan (adversary), 2 Cor. 4: 4. The god of this world.
Sep-tu-a-gint. A Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament in common use in the time of Christ.
Se-rug (shoot, tendril), Gen. 11: 20. Son of Reu and great-grandfather of Abraham.
Shal-lum (retribution), Neh. 3: 12. Ruler of half of Jerusalem in the time of Nehemiah.
Shal-ma-ne-ser (fire worshiper), 2 Kings 17: 3. King of Assyria.
Sha-phan (coney), 2 Kings 22: 3. Scribe or secretary of king Josiah.
Shec-a-ni-ah (familiar with Jehovah), Ezra 8: 3. Among those who returned with Ezra.
She-chem (shoulder), Josh. 20: 7. A city of Samaria, and one of the cities of refuge.

She-lah (petition), Gen. 10: 23. Son of Arpachshad, and ancestor of Abraham.
She-ma-iah (Jehovah hears), 1 Kings 12: 22. A prophet in the time of Rehoboam.
Shesh-baz-zar (fire worshiper), Ezek. 5: 14. The Babylonian name for Zerubbabel.
Shi-loh (place of rest), Josh. 18: 1. The place where the old tabernacle stood.
Shi-shak, 2 Chron. 12: 2. Egyptian king who invaded Judah in the time of Rehoboam.
Shu-shan (lily), Esther 1: 2. The capital of Persia.
Sim-e-on (a hearing), Gen. 35: 23. Second son of Jacob by Leah.
Si-na-i (jagged), Ex. 19: 1. Mountain on which the law of Moses was given.
Sis-e-ra (battle array), Judges 4: 2. Captain of the army of Jabin.
So-dom (place of lime), Gen. 13: 10. City in which Lot lived.
Ste-phen (crown), Acts 6: 8. The first Christian martyr.
Syr-i-ans, 2 Sam. 8: 5. People of Syria, a country north of Canaan.

T

Tabernacle, Ex. 40: 34. A tent built by Moses for the worship of Jehovah.
Tabernacles, Feast of, Lev. 23: 34. A time when the Jews lived in booths made of branches of trees; fifteenth day of the seventh month, Tisri, our October.
Ta-bor (height), Judges 4: 1-3. A mountain of central Palestine.
Tad-mor (city of palms), 2 Chron. 8: 3. A city built by Solomon, the modern Palmyra.
Tat-te-nai (gift), Ezek. 5: 3. Governor of a Persian province.
Te-ko-a (to strike), 2 Chron. 20: 20. A town six miles south of Bethlehem.
Te-ko-ites, Neh. 3: 5. Citizens of Tekoa, whose nobles refused to help build the wall of Jerusalem.
Te-rah (turning, wandering), Gen. 11: 27. Father of Abraham.
Tim-nath-se-rah, Josh. 19: 50, or **Tim-nath-he-res**, Judges 2: 9 (portion of abundance, and portion of the sun). Home of Joshua in the hill country of Ephraim.
Tir-sha-tha (stern), A word occurring in some version as a title of Nehemiah. In American Standard we have the word governor.
To-bi-ah (goodness of Jehovah), Neh. 2: 19. An Ammonite enemy of Nehemiah.
Tyre, 1 Kings 5: 1. A Phoenician city, home of king Hiram.

U

Ur (light), Gen. 11: 31. The city in Chaldea where Abraham was born.
U-rim and **Thum-mim** (lights and perfections), Ex. 28: 30. Part of the equipment of the high priest through which revelations from God were made.
Uz-zi-ah (strength of Jehovah), 2 Kings 15: 13. Ninth king of Judah.

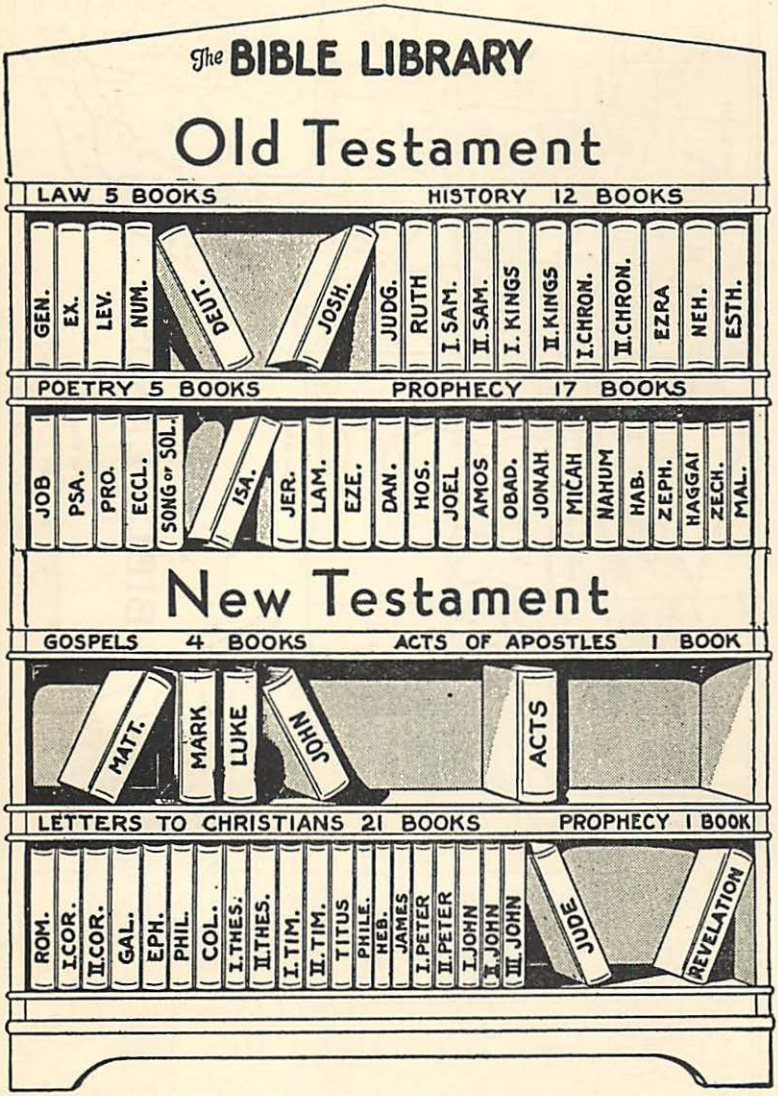
V

Vash-ti, Esther 1: 9. Queen of Persia replaced by Esther.

Z

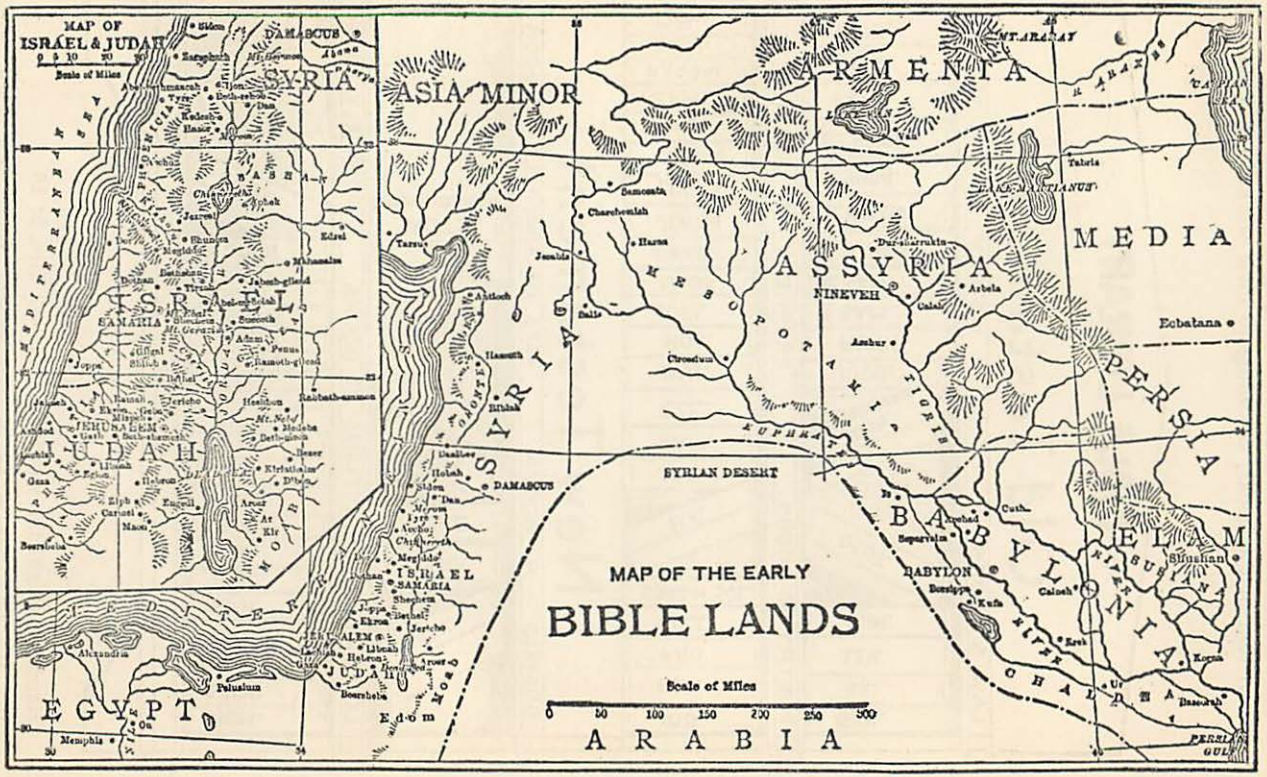
Za-dok (upright), 1 Kings 2: 35. A priest who served under David and Solomon.
Zeb-u-lun (dwelling), Gen. 35: 23. Tenth son of Jacob, and sixth by Leah.
Zech-a-ri-ah (Jehovah remembers), Zech. 1: 1. A prophet who encouraged the builders of Jerusalem.
Zed-e-ki-ah (justice of Jehovah), 2 Kings 24: 17. Same as Mattaniah; last, twentieth, king of Judah.
Ze-rub-ba-bel (begotten in Babylon), Ezek. 2: 2. Head of the tribe of Judah, and the leader of the first group of captives to return to Jerusalem.
Zil-pah (drop), Gen. 35: 26. A Syrian handmaid of Leah, and mother of Gad and Asher.
Zo-bah (statue), 2 Sam. 8: 3. A rich and powerful nation in the time of David lying between Syria and the Euphrates.
Zo-rah (sinking down), Judges 13: 1. The birthplace of Samson, twenty miles west of Jerusalem.

"And books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works."—Rev. 20: 12.



"Handling aright the word of truth."—2 Tim. 2: 15.

"For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."—John 1: 17


MAP OF THE EARLY
BIBLE LANDS
Scale of Miles
0 50 100 150 200 250 300
MAP OF ISRAEL & JUDAH
Scale of Miles
SYRIA
DAMASCUS
ASIA MINOR
ARMENIA
MT. ARARAT
MEDIA
ASSYRIA
NINEVEH
Calah
Arbela
Ecbatana
PERSIA
MESOPOTAMIA
TIGRIS
EUPHRATES
SYRIAN DESERT
BABYLONIA
BABYLON
ELAM
Shushan
CHALDEA
ARABIA
EGYPT
Memphis
Pelusium
Alexandria
Edom
ISRAEL
SAMARIA
JUDAH
JERUSALEM
Jericho
Bethel
Shechem
Hebron
Beersheba
Gaza
Joppa
Ashdod
Ashkelon
Ekron
Gath
Lachish
Eglon
Carmel
Maon
Ziph
Engedi
Ziklag
Ashtoroth
Ramoth-gilead
Mahanaim
Jabesh-gilead
Succoth
Penuel
Zaphon
Adam
Zarethan
Rabbath-ammon
Heshbon
Medeba
Bethshan
Jezreel
Shunem
Megiddo
Dothan
Tirzah
Shiloh
Ai
Gilgal
Mizpah
Ramah
Gibeah
Bethlehem
Hebron
Tyre
Sidon
Zarephath
Dan
Kedesh
Hazor
Ashtoroth
Edrei
Tarsus
Antioch
Damascus
Samosata
Carchemish
Haran
Nineveh
Calah
Arbela
Ecbatana
Tabria
Babylon
Borsippa
Kish
Erech
Ur
Eridu
Sippar
Cuth
Susa
Ur
Kerman
Bassorah
PERSIAN GULF

FIRST QUARTER

EARLY HISTORY OF ISRAEL

AIM:—*The aim of the lessons for the entire year is to give a history of God's chosen people through whom Christ came The aim of the first quarter is to give the history of the origin and development of the nation of Israel, to see God's hand in the beginning and formation of national Israel, and to learn practical principles for the present day.*

Lesson I—January 4, 1948

THE FOUNDER CHOSEN

The Lesson Text

Gen. 11: 27, 31; 12: 1-9

27 Now these are the generations of Tē'răh. Tē'răh begat Abram, Nā'hôr, and Hā'răn; and Hā'răn begat Lot.

. . . . . .

31 And Tē'răh took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Hā'răn, his son's son, and Sā'rāi his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chăl'dēes, to go into the land of Cā'năan; and they came unto Hā'răn, and dwelt there.

1 Now Jē-hō'văh said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee:
2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing:
3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.
4 So Abram went, as Jē-hō'văh had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Hā'răn.
5 And Abram took Sā'rāi his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Hā'răn; and they went forth to go into the land of Cā'năan; and into the land of Cā'năan they came.
6 And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Shē'chĕm, unto the oak of Mō'rĕh. And the Cā'năan-ite was then in the land.
7 And Jē-hō'văh appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto Jē-hō'văh, who appeared unto him.
8 And he removed from thence unto the mountain on the east of Bĕth'-ĕl, and pitched his tent, having Bĕth'-ĕl on the west, and Ā'ī on the east: and there he builded an altar unto Jē-hō'văh, and called upon the name of Jē-hō'văh.
9 And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South.

Acts 7: 2-4

2 And he said, Brethren and fathers, hearken: The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mĕs-ō-pō-tā'mī-ȧ, before he dwelt in Hā'răn,
3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy land, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee.
4 Then came he out of the land of the Chăl-dæ'ăns, and dwelt in Hā'răn: and from thence, when his father was dead, God removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"*I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing.*" (Gen. 12: 2.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Heb. 11: 8-12.

Daily Bible Readings

December	29.	M.	Abraham Leaves Ur (Gen. 11: 27-32)
December	30.	T.	Abraham in Egypt (Gen. 12: 10-20)
December	31.	W.	Abraham Blessed by Melchizedek (Gen. 14: 17-24)
January	1.	T.	Abraham Promised a Son (Gen. 17: 15-21)
January	2.	F.	Abraham Intercedes for Sodom (Gen. 18: 22-33)
January	3.	S.	Abraham Given a Son (Gen. 21: 1-7)
January	4.	S.	Abraham Offers His Son (Gen. 22: 1-12)

Lesson Subject Explained

Since the nation to be founded was to be of a peculiar character, and to serve definite high and holy purpose in the world, the founder of that nation must be a man of oustanding qualities; and his ideals must be in line with the purposes of God in founding the nation. It is possible that Abraham at the time of his first call was not just all God wanted him to be, but during his years of wandering and walking with God he would perfect that which was lacking in his character. It is reasonable to think that Abraham was the best qualified man in all the world at that time for the founding of a nation such as God wished to build. Though reared in idolatry (Josh. 24: 2), he was either not a worshiper of idols, or was of such an open mind as to give them up at the revelation of God. It is generally thought that there were a few who still held to the worship of the true God, and that Abraham was among that number.

Context of the Lesson

Beginning in Gen. 11: 10 and continuing to the verses with which our lesson begins we have the generations of Shem, the son of Noah. Abraham is in the tenth generation from Noah. In between we have Shem's descendants in the following order: Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, Terah, Abram. The amount of time covered from Shem to Abraham is a matter not to be settled easily, if at all. In the first place it is said in Gen. 11: 26 that Terah lived seventy years and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran. If by this we understand that Abram was born when Terah was seventy years old, the time from Shem to Abram would be three hundred and ninety years. But if Abram was Terah's first born, at the age of seventy, and Abram left Haran on the death of Terah, and Abram was seventy-five when he left Haran (Gen. 12: 4), we would have to conclude that Terah lived only one hundred and forty-five years. But this does not agree with Gen. 11: 32, which says Terah lived two hundred and five years. We therefore conclude that Abram was not Terah's first born, but is mentioned first because of his preeminence among the sons of Terah. Subtracting seventy-five from two hundred and five will give us one hundred thirty, which must have been the age of Terah at the birth of Abram. This would give us four hundred and fifty years from the birth of Shem to the birth of Abram. Since Shem was one hundred years old at the time of the flood, and Abraham was seventy-five years of age when he left Haran for Canaan, we know that it was four hundred and twenty-five years from the flood to the time Abram went into Canaan.

Golden Text Explained

Make of thee a great nation. We are accustomed to think of Abraham as not knowing much about a great nation at the time of his

call. We usually think of him as a man who knew nothing but tents, and the small tribal existence similar to the Arabs of a later date. One of the latest books on Archeology, copyright 1946, has this to say: "We cannot go into any description of Abraham's native city except to say that it was a metropolis of approximately 250,000 inhabitants, the chief Babylonian center of moon-god worship, and that its museum of antiquities would have shown a civilization that reached its apex exactly one thousand five hundred years before Abraham was born." (Adams) So Abraham was a citizen of a great nation, and lived in a great city. And this promise meant to him that he was to become the head and founder of such a nation.

Not only was Abraham's nation to be great materially, but it was to accomplish a great mission in the world. Through Abraham, and the nation founded by him, the true worship of the one God was to be preserved, and the redeemer of man was to be brought into the world.

Bless thee, and make thy name great. What did God's promise of blessings mean to Abraham? Being reared in an idolatrous land, what opportunity did he have to know how God could and would bless people? Whether Abraham ever saw Shem, the son of Noah, we do not know; but we do know that Shem lived one hundred and fifty years after the birth of Abraham. Shem knew what the blessing of God meant from his experiences during the flood, and no doubt Abraham had access to a knowledge of these things.

Abraham's name was made great in several ways. First, his name was changed from Abram (high father) to Abraham (father of a multitude). Next, he was respected by all the kings and nations from Damascus to Egypt in his day. (Gen. 14.) Next, more people today look to him as their father than look to any other man of his time or since. The twelve tribes of Jews of course look to him as father; then there are the twelve sons of Ishmael and their descendants; and last, there are the six sons of Keturah and all that sprang from them. But the name of Abraham was made great in that more people look to him as their spiritual father than look to any other man who ever lived. The Jews, Mohammedans, and Christians claim him. And Paul tells us that if we are Christ's we are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise. (Gal. 3: 29.)

Be thou a blessing. No one can be blessed by Jehovah without being obligated to bless others in return. Paul gave thanks to God for the blessing of comfort that he might be able to comfort others who were in affliction "through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." (2 Cor. 1: 3, 4.) Abraham blessed the world by giving it an example of faith seldom, if ever, equalled; by preserving the knowledge and worship of the true God in a time of almost universal idolatry; and by founding a nation through which the redeemer of mankind was brought into the world.

Helps on the Lesson Text

And Terah took Abram his son. From this reading it would seem that Terah, and not Abraham, was the leader in the move from Ur of Chaldea to Haran. But Stephen's language in our lesson informs us that the call came to Abraham, and that his move from Ur to Haran was in obedience to God's call to him, and not to Terah. But since

Terah was still alive and he was the head of the family, his name is mentioned as being the leader of all that left Ur.

It is stated in the text that they left "Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan." But Stephen said God simply told Abraham to go to a land which would be shown him. And Paul says, "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." (Heb. 11: 8.) So we conclude that this statement in our text was from the historian's point of view. This was written more than four hundred years after Abraham left Ur, so since the historian knew Abraham left Ur and actually went to Canaan, he said he left Ur to go to Canaan.

Get thee out of thy country. Abraham was to leave everything he knew, loved, and depended upon for happiness, and even life itself. Missionaries who leave America today to go to Africa or Europe have travel funds given and their support pledged before they leave, which is good and right; but Abraham had none of these. He had God's word to the effect that he would be blessed and made great.

In thee shall all families be blessed. It is doubtful if Abraham understood all the implications of this promise. Peter told the Jews of his day they were heirs of the covenant God made with the fathers when he said to Abraham, "And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Servant, sent him to bless you, in turning away everyone of you from your iniquities." (Acts 3: 25, 26.) And Paul said the gospel was preached to Abraham in these words, "In thee shall all the nations be b essed." (Gal. 3: 8.) From these passages we conclude that Jesus, the gospel, salvation in Christ, and eternal life are all wrapped up in this promise to Abraham.

And Lot went with him. Lot was the nephew of Abraham; he was the son of Haran, the son of Terah. Haran died before the tribe left Ur. (Gen. 9: 28.) Lot proved to be more trouble to Abraham than he was a help. Abraham had to rescue him from his captors. (Gen. 14.) He had to divide the land between them because their herdsmen were fighting, and Lot took the well-watered land. (Gen. 13.) And Lot's condition in Sodom gave Abraham great concern when he learned the city was to be destroyed. (Gen. 18.)

The Canaanite was then in the land. Just what the presence of the Canaanites in the land meant to Abraham we will never know, but this mention is not made for nothing. This perhaps constituted a trial of Abraham's faith. God was to take him to a land to give it to him. But when he got there he found that it was already possessed; the Canaanite was there, and in far greater strength and better position than Abraham. How was God to give him, the head of a very small tribe, a land already possessed by a multitude of people capable of defending themselves?

Unto thy seed will I give this land. The promise was made to Abraham, then to Abraham and his seed after him (Gen. 13: 15), and then to his seed. (Gen. 18: 15.) This promise was fulfilled in the days of Joshua. "So Jehovah gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein." (Josh. 21: 43-45.) But in spite of this positive statement there are men today who say the promise has never been fulfilled, and that the land is yet to be given to the Jews.

There he builded an altar unto Jehovah. Though Abraham never built a house for himself and family, he did build an altar. Too many people today reverse the matter. They build for themselves, and then if they have any left over they will give some of that to the Lord. It is a significant fact that Abraham built an altar in every place he dwelt, except in Egypt where he practiced deceit. This suggests that when people are in error and sin they are not inclined to worship God.

When he was in Mesopotamia. This was a large section of country along the Euphrates River, Haran being in the northern part and Ur in the southern. The record in Genesis does not mention this call, though it is said there that Terah and Abraham lived in Ur and that they moved from there to Haran. But were it not for Stephen we would not know that the call actually came to Abraham in Ur.

From thy kindred. The fact that Abraham was to be separated from his kindred is mentioned both by Moses and Stephen. Why Terah went as far as Haran, and Lot as far as Canaan when the command was to leave his kindred we may never know. But Terah died in Haran, and Lot through love of money went to Sodom, leaving Abraham on the tableland, and his posterity never mixed with the descendants of Lot.

The Historical Background

TIME.—Abraham left Ur about 1926 B.C. It is thought he stayed in Haran five years, so he left there in 1921 B.C. Abraham was born in 1996 B.C., and died one hundred and seventy-five years later in 1821 B.C. The time for the events mentioned in our text from Acts is A.D. 31.

PLACES.—There has been some difference of opinion as to the location of Ur until in recent years. A recent authority says, "Today, through the accurate work of Taylor, who found the cuneiform cylinders of Nabonidus of Babylon. . . . the student of the Old Testament is shown the actual town where Abraham was born and where he lived for half a century. The recovery of Ur has completely revolutionized our conceptions of Abraham. He was no Bedouin sheikh camped somewhere along the fringes of the burning Arabian sands, but was an urbanite of the first-rate culture who caught somehow the gleam of the upward calling and struck out for the free and open spaces on his trek of faith." (Adams.)

We are told that the city of Ur "enclosed an area of two and a half miles in circuit." One building, called the Ziggurat, was two hundred and ten feet long, one hundred and thirty-eight feet wide, and was three stories high, the lowest story being thirty-five feet. The ruins of this building can be seen today. Explorers say that the well-to-do citizen of Ur in Abraham's day lived in houses as good as the same class of citizens of modern Bagdad. One library has been uncovered containing evidences of instruction in "writing, dictation, reading, arithmetic, geometry, grammar, etc." "Finally, life as a whole was lived on a relatively high plane, more or less characterized by accepted conventionalities which had been customary for generations, and subject to laws which, as in the Hammurabic compilation, reflect a civil order of unusual attainment." (Adams.)

PERSONS.—Terah, Abraham, Sarai, and Lot are the principal characters in our lesson.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Interest in these departments will be on characters, more than on the founding of a nation. Attention of the children can be gained by presenting the thought of leaving one's home to go to some unknown land. This will illustrate his great faith. Another thought to emphasize the degree of his faith is that he was to leave his kindred and his father's house. How would these children like to do that? Would they be willing to do it if they were told by the Lord to do such? If flannel boards or sand tables are available, they may be used to good advantage to catch and hold the attention.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The departments will be interested in locating the several places mentioned in the text, and tracing on a map Abraham in his journey from Ur to Egypt. Each one should be able at the close of the lesson to trace the journey and tell what happened at each place. The Jew of today is a proof of the existence of the founder of the nation, and until we have a better explanation of the beginning of the Hebrew people we must accept the Bible account given in this lesson. This lesson affords good material for teaching the lesson of trust in God, and following him where he leads in our manner of life.

Young People and Adult Departments

Students in these departments should be able to trace Abraham's ancestors back to Noah. Abraham's willing obedience to the call of God, the promise of God for the encouragement of Abraham, and Abraham's faith in God and his promises are lessons to be stressed. Would a man cut loose from his business, his friends, and go with his family into a nation where the gospel has never gone if God should call him? Students should see that Abraham had his business, his friends, and his social connections, and that it cost him as much in these respects as it would cost any one of us today to go into a strange land. Abraham's faith accepted God's word; he feared God enough to be submissive to his will; and he obeyed God in spite of the cost. This is the faith that justifies. Only when we walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham (Rom. 4: 12) can we expect to be justified by faith. Justification by faith only is a doctrine of human origin. (Jas. 2: 24.) The nation founded by Abraham was great as long as it walked in the steps of the faith of its founder, and in that way only can the church be a great and holy nation.

Topics for Discussion

1. The coming of Abraham into Canaan was in some respects similar to the coming of Jesus into this world. The land was to be given to him and his seed after him, yet he came unannounced, and the people had no idea of his importance. Jesus was the rightful ruler of all men, yet the people about him, who saw him in the carpenter's shop, had no idea of his greatness. God works quietly and without show. Those people who make the greatest fuss and show usually accomplish little of permanent value.

2. The faith of Abraham was—(1) submissive and obedient; (2) prompt and unhesitating; (3) intelligent and reasonable; and (4) patient and persevering. *(Pulpit Commentary.)*

3. Abraham had much to be discouraged about. First, he was promised a land, and yet it was held by the Canaanites. Smaller faith and less patience would have complained that the promise was not being fulfilled. Next, he had no permanent settlement in the land. "Abram passed through the land," verse 6; "he removed . . . unto the mountain," verse 8; "Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South," verse 9. These are expressions which suggest that he was a stranger in his own land. Had he been more intent upon worldly possessions than upon gaining a home in the city whose builder and maker is God, he would have been discouraged. Genuine peace and satisfaction in this life are attained only by those who look heavenward and whose hopes are set on a heavenly home instead of earthly goods. (Heb. 11: 8-10.)

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What thoughts are suggested in the Devotional Reading?
What do you consider the most interesting thought suggested in daily Bible readings?
Why was Abraham chosen to be the founder of the nation of Israel?
How many generations between Noah and Abraham? How many years?
What do you know of the city of Ur?
What of the social and educational advantages offered in Ur?
In what ways was the nation founded by Abraham great?
How was Abraham's name made great?
How many people respect his name today?
In what way was Abraham made a blessing, and to whom has he been a blessing?
What part did Terah have in the removal from Ur to Canaan?
Did they know they were going to Canaan when they left Ur?
What guarantee of support did Abraham have in this new land?
In what promise was the gospel preached to Abraham?
Who was Lot, and what is your estimate of his character, and help to Abraham?
What do you think the presence of the Canaanites in the land meant to Abraham?
When did God fulfill his promise to give the land to the seed of Abraham?
What is the significance of Abraham's altars, and why build none in Egypt?
What light does Stephen throw on the call and journey of Abraham?
Had Abraham fully obeyed the command to leave his kindred before his separation from Lot?

Lesson II—January 11, 1948

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

The Lesson Text

Gen. 17: 2-14

2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.
3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

4 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be the father of a multitude of nations.
5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for the father of a multitude of nations have I made thee.
6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.
7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee.
8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land of thy sojournings, all the land of Cā'nāan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.
9 And God said unto Abraham, And as for thee, thou shalt keep my covenant, thou, and thy seed after thee throughout their generations.
10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee: every male among you shall be circumcised.
11 And ye shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of a covenant betwixt me and you.
12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every male throughout your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any foreigner that is not of thy seed.
13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.
14 And the uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."* (Gen. 12: 3b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ps. 105: 9-15.

Daily Bible Readings

January 5. M.....The Promise to Abraham (Gen. 12: 1-9)
January 6. T.....The Promise Renewed (Gen. 15: 1-11)
January 7. W.....Bondage Foretold (Gen. 15: 12-21)
January 8. T.....The Birth of Ishmael (Gen. 16: 1-15)
January 9. F.....Ishmael Sent Away (Gen. 21: 8-21)
January 10. S.....Keturah's Sons Sent Away (Gen. 25: 1-11)
January 11. S.....The Handmaid and the Free Woman (Gal. 4: 21-31)

Lesson Subject Explained

Strictly speaking a covenant is a solemn agreement between two equals, "by which each party binds himself to fulfill certain conditions, and was assured of receiving certain advantages." From this it is obvious that God and man could not make a covenant, since they are not in any sense of the word equals. Man not being in any way in the position of an independent covenanting party, the phrase is evidently used by way of accommodation. Strictly speaking, such a covenant is quite unconditional, and amounts to a promise, or an act of mere favor on God's part. Thus the assurance by God after the flood, that a like judgment should not be repeated, and that the recurrence of the seasons, and of day and night, should not cease, is called a covenant. (Gen. 9: Jer. 33: 20.) And the promise of the land of Canaan to Abraham's seed is called a covenant. "In that day Jehovah made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land." (Gen. 15: 18.) However promises were usually conditioned upon man's consent to fulfill certain duties. The land was promised to the seed of Abraham as long as they would obey the commandments and keep his statutes. (Deut. 4: 1, 26; 30: 15-20.) The rite of circumcision was a duty to be performed by the Jews following God's promise to Abraham as revealed in our lesson.

Context of the Lesson

Abraham was seventy-years old when he was first called in Ur. Five years later he received another call, and the promise was made clear to him. Ten years passed, and so far as we know there was no appearance, not even a word from God. Then we have the promise of an heir "that shall come forth out of thine own bowels." (Gen. 15: 4.) Since Sarah was barren they could see no way for Abraham to have an heir unless he had another wife, so Sarah gave him her handmaid, Hagar, and Ishmael was born when Abraham was eighty-six years old. (Gen. 16: 15, 16.) But of course it was not God's will for Abraham to have a son by Hagar, and this arrangement was no help—some seem to think it delayed the fulfillment of the promise by fourteen years.

There is a skip of thirteen years between the close of chapter 16 and the first verse of chapter 17, where it is said that Abraham was ninety-nine years old at the time of our lesson. During this time Abraham, so far as we can know, had nothing more than the ordinary events of providence to assure him of God's presence and guidance. We are prone to excuse ourselves from as good a life as these Old Testament worthies lived on the ground that God appeared to them. But God's appearances even to the greatest of them were few and far between.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date of this lesson is given as 1897 B.C. It had been twenty-four years since Abraham entered the land of Canaan for the first time.

PLACE.—The location of Abraham at the time of our lesson is not mentioned, but when he and Lot separated it is said that Abraham "came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron." (Gen. 13: 18.) And immediately following the incidents of our lesson it is said that "Jehovah appeared unto him by the oaks of Mamre." (Gen. 18: 1.) So we may safely conclude that this was his home at the time of our lesson. Mamre was an old Amorite chief who, with his brothers Eshcol and Aner, were confederates with Abraham in the early days of his residence in Canaan. (Gen. 14: 13.) He had his home in or near Hebron. And Abraham lived there quite some time. It was the oldest town in Palestine, halfway between Jerusalem and Beersheba, being twenty miles from each. Sarah was buried there, and so was Isaac, in the cave, the only land in Canaan which Abraham ever owned.

PERSONS.—God and Abraham are the only persons mentioned in our lesson text.

Golden Text Explained

In thee. This is a promise made to Abraham, called a covenant by Peter (Acts 3: 25), and though it included him, it was more far-reaching, extending to Christ as the promised seed of Abraham. This was a promise that did not include Terah, Abraham's father, or any of his brothers. It designated him as the one person of his time who was to be so signally blessed. And for this reason Abraham was to be remembered, and held dear to the memory of all men of all time because of the blessings, to be received and enjoyed by humanity for time and eternity through him.

Shall all the families of the earth be blessed. The word *families* here is *nations* in Gal. 3: 8, so it is not to be taken to mean family as we use the word, the unit of society. The Jews thought they were a privileged people on account of their relationship to Abraham. And there was some ground for their attitude, had they not gone to an extreme. Paul affirmed that they had much advantage in every way. (Rom. 3: 1, 2.) But their mistake was in thinking that salvation was theirs by reason of the physical relationship to Abraham. This promise should have caused them to see that God would include more within his blessings than the physical seed, for it is said that "all nations," or families, of the earth are to be blessed in Abraham.

This promise is being fulfilled in Christ. Paul tells us that the promise was to the seed of Abraham as well as to Abraham. (Gal. 3: 16.) And he further says that the word *seed* is not plural, but singular, and refers to Christ. Paul also says that the gospel was preached to Abraham when this promise was made. (Gal. 3: 8.) So out of this covenant comes the gospel of Christ. Out of the land promise made to Abraham came the old covenant at Sinai. (Ps. 105: 8-11.) The land promise was (1) temporal; (2) national; (3) material. And the covenant growing out of it partook of these characteristics. The old covenant, the law of Moses, was temporal in that it was given to last until the seed, Christ, should come. (Gal. 3: 19, 23-25.) It was national in that is was never given to any nation except the Jews. (Deut. 5: 3.) It was material in that its laws regulated the material activities of the people, its sacrifices were animals, its ordinances were carnal. (Heb. 9: 1-11.)

This promise of our text is the opposite of the land promise; it is the seed promise, and out of it came the gospel just as the law came out of the land promise. And as the law of Moses partook of the nature of the land promise, so the gospel partakes of the nature of the seed promise. Paul speaks of the covenants being *enacted upon promises* (Heb. 8: 6), and the gospel enacted upon a better promise. The seed promise was (1) universal, in that it extends to all families of the earth; (2) it is eternal in that its provisions are not for our temporal, but our eternal welfare; and (3) it is spiritual, in that its ordinances, its worship, and sacrifices are all spiritual in their nature. The gospel, the new covenant, enacted upon such a promise, partakes of the nature of the promise, and is universal, eternal, and spiritual. These lessons are of unusual importance, and much time and thought should be given them.

Helps on the Lesson Text

I will make my covenant between me and thee. Preachers generally, of the denominational world, confuse this covenant with that of Gen. 12: 3, which was the seed promise. This is the same as that of Gen. 15: 18, "In that day Jehovah made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land." If this is doubted the reader may compare Gen. 15: 18 with this verse and verse 8 of our text. But it may be objected that in Gen. 15: 18 it is said God made the covenant "in that day," while here God says, "I will make my covenant." The *Pulpit Commentary* says the literal translation is, "I will give." And Bush in his notes, says the same, and then adds, "Will fix, appoint, confirm. . . . It is not of course the annunciation of a new purpose, but simply the renewal, the confirmation, of one long

standing. It is in fact the fifth declaration or utterance of the same gracious design of making Abraham the father of an innumerable seed."

And Abram fell on his face. This is a bodily posture expressive of reverential awe and worship, of the deepest humility and the most profound adoration. It is to be feared whether we feel the emotions today which caused Abraham to fall on his face. Of all things we need most to cultivate a keen sense of the fear of Jehovah.

Thy name shall be called Abraham. Up to this time he was called Abram, which means "exalted father," but now he is given a name which means "father of a multitude." Why the change in name? Names meant something in those days. The word Abram just did not mean all that God intended to make this man. Next, God had made him a promise that he was to be the father of a multitude no man could number when as yet he had no son. And even now the son of promise had not been born. But God gave him the name in advance to give him assurance that the promise would be fulfilled. Undoubtedly the change of name at this time was to encourage him and to strengthen his faith. Notice the expression, "The father of a multitude of nations have I made thee." Paul made mention of this very expression, and said God "calleth the things that are not, as though they were." (Rom. 4: 17.)

Kings shall come out of thee. Abraham was human enough to be encouraged by the promise that some of his posterity would be kings. And perhaps there is no way of knowing how many times over this promise has been fulfilled among the sons of Ishmael and Keturah. However this promise finds its intended fulfillment in David, Solomon, and perhaps, in Christ as king on David's throne. And of course all the kings of Israel and Judah would be included. Honor and dignity were to characterize Abraham's posterity as well as numbers.

I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee. In verses 7 and 8 we have the contents of the covenant. After telling them it was to be an everlasting (age lasting) covenant, the Lord specified his part of the contract. (1) He was to be their God. "All the privileges of the covenant, all its joys, and all its hopes, are summed up in this: a man needs desire no more than this to make him happy." All that God is, he will be to his people. Blessed is that people whose God is Jehovah! (2) He pledged himself to give them the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession. This we find elsewhere was conditional on their obedience, and since they disobeyed they lost the land. But he did give them the land, fulfilling his part of the covenant. (Josh. 21: 43.)

And as for thee, thou shalt keep my covenant. In verses 9-14 we have the human side of the agreement, that which Abraham and his seed after him were to do to keep the covenant in force, or binding. They were to be circumcised. Certainly this is not a full and detailed expression of all of their duties. In fact it was not yet time to reveal to them the law with its ordinances and statutes which it would be the duty of Abraham's seed to obey. But all who received circumcision under this covenant had the seal and sign of God's ownership on them, and the pledge to obey his will. For this interpretation of the implications of circumcision we have the authority of Paul. "Yea, I testify again to every man that receiveth circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole law." (Gal. 5: 3.)

He that is eight days old shall be circumcised. Two reasons have been suggested for setting the date on the eighth day. (1) The child would by that time "gather strength to undergo the pain of it." (M. Henry.) (2) The mother is definitely said to be unclean until the eighth day after the birth of a male child, and commentators agree that the child was also counted unclean. (Lev. 12: 2, 3.) Animals could not be offered to God until after the eighth day. (Lev. 22: 27.)

Circumcision served a number of uses. "(1) to distinguish the seed of Abraham from the Gentiles, (2) to perpetuate the memory of Jehovah's covenant, (3) to foster in the nation the hope of the Messiah, (4) to remind them of the duty of cultivating moral purity (Deut. 10: 16), (5) to preach to them the gospel of a righteousness by faith (Rom. 4: 11), (6) to suggest the idea of a holy or a spiritual seed of Abram (Rom. 2: 29.)" *(Pulpit Commentary.)*

He that is . . . bought with thy money. Not only the seed of Abraham but all males bought by them as slaves were to be circumcised.

Uncircumcised . . . shall be cut off. Some think this means death, but most likely the meaning is that they shall be denied the benefits of this covenant. The uncircumcised had broken the covenant, therefore forfeited his rights to the blessings of the covenant.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

God's appearance to and talking with Abraham are matters of interest to these departments. God made appearances to good men, not to evil men. God was honoring Abraham on account of his faith and love for God and right. God made an agreement (covenant) with Abraham, and through him with all the seed of Abraham to give them a land in which to live and become a great nation. God agreed to be their God provided they would obey him. It will be better not to mention the sign of the covenant in these departments. Disobedience disqualified one to enjoy the benefits of the agreement, so when we fail to obey God today we will be denied the blessings of God.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

These students will be able to grasp the lesson concerning the difference between the land promise and the seed promise, and the covenants enacted upon these two promises. And an understanding of these matters will help them to divide properly other scriptures bearing on the covenants.

Circumcision helped to keep the Jews separate from the rest of the world. This separateness was for the purpose of bringing Christ into the world, and was never intended to mark them as a superior people. However the Jews got the idea they were a superior people, and more deserving of the favor of God. This caused the Jews to reject the gospel when they saw it was offered to the Gentiles. This presents a good opportunity to teach the lesson of spiritual equality among all races and nations.

Young People and Adult Departments

The lessons referred to in the above section should be developed here, especially the two promises and the covenants enacted upon them. If this idea is developed fully, and illustrated, it will help

them to see why the law of Moses was taken out of the way, and why the gospel was to be preached to all men. When is a covenant broken? If one party breaks a covenant, is the other party bound to continue his part? What did God say about these matters? (Heb. 8: 9.)

Topics for Discussion

1. In the context of our lesson (Gen. 17: 1) we have this statement, "Walk before me." There are three different positions one may take with reference to God which teach three different lessons worthy of our attention. (1) Walking *before* God denotes his watchfulness of us; his inspection of all we say and do. It is well for us ever to keep in mind the fact that we are before God, and that he sees us and records our deed, and that we will meet our record in judgment, (2) we are said to walk *with* God. (Gen. 5: 24.) Walking with God denotes our fellowship and communion we have with God. He is our daily companion. He talks to us in his word, and we talk to him in prayer. It is good to walk through life with one so wise, so pure, so strong, and so thoughtful for our good; and (3) we are said to walk *after* God. (Deut. 13: 4.) This denotes following an example. We have God as our example in the person of Jesus. Peter tells us to walk in his steps. (1 Pet. 2: 21.) Go only where Jesus goes, say only what you are willing for Jesus to hear, and think only those things fit for the mind of Jesus to entertain.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What thoughts are suggested in the Devotional Reading?
What is the most interesting thought suggested in the daily Bible readings?
What is a covenant, a testament, and a will?
Why are promises referred to as covenants?
How did Abraham and Sarah attempt to help God in the fulfillment of his promise?
How old was Abraham at the time of our lesson?
How long since he entered Canaan?
How often had God appeared to him during that time?
What do you know of the place where this covenant was made?
What is the meaning of the word "families" in our Golden Text?
If this promise was to all families, in what way did the Jews have an advantage?
What two promises were made to Abraham?
On which promise was the law of Moses enacted?
What were the characteristics of the land promise?
How did the nature of the promise effect the covenant enacted upon it?
On what promise was the gospel, new covenant, enacted?
What were the characteristics of the seed promise?
How did this promise effect the covenant enacted upon it?
With which promise does our Golden Text deal?
With which promise does our Lesson Text deal?
Was a new promise mentioned, or an old one renewed in our lesson?
What can you say of Abraham's humility and reverence?
Why the change of names from Abram to Abraham?

What was God's part of this covenant, and what was man's part?
What was the sign of the covenant, and what uses did circumcision serve?
Who were to be circumcised, and what was the penalty for not being circumcised?

Lesson III—January 18, 1948

CANAAN PROMISED

The Lesson Text

Gen. 13: 1, 11-17

1 And Abram went up out of Ĕ'gĭpt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the South.

. . . . . .

11 So Lot chose him all the Plain of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.
12 Abram dwelt in the land of Cā'năan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the Plain, and moved his tent as far as Sŏd'ŏm.
13 Now the men of Sŏd'ŏm were wicked and sinners against Jē-hō'văh exceedingly.
14 And Jē-hō'văh said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward:
15 For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.
16 And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then may thy seed also be numbered.
17 Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for unto thee will I give it.

Acts 7: 5-7

5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: and he promised that he would give it to him in possession, and to his seed after him, when *as yet* he had no child.
6 And God spake on this wise, that his seed should sojourn in a strange land, and that they should bring them into bondage, and treat them ill, four hundred years.
7 And the nation to which they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever."* (Gen. 13: 15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 4: 1-8.

Daily Bible Readings

January 12. M.....The Boundaries of the Land (Gen. 15: 12-21)
January 13. T.....Moses Viewed the Land (Deut 3: 23-29)
January 14. W.....Israel Entered the Land (Josh. 3: 7-17)
January 15. T.....God's Promise Fulfilled (Josh. 21: 43-45)
January 16. F.....Land Possessed Conditionally (Josh. 23: 4-16)
January 17. S.....Israel Carried Captive (2 Kings 18: 9-12)
January 18. S.....Judah Carried Captive (2 Kings 24: 10-17)

Lesson Subject Explained

The Lord could not very well fulfill his promise to make a great nation of Abraham without giving him and his posterity a place to live, though nothing of the land was mentioned when the promise was first made to make him a great nation. It was not until Abraham had gone throughout the length of the land that God said, "Unto thy seed will I give this land." (Gen. 12: 7.) Then ten years later Jehovah

appeared again to Abraham, promised him a son, and in that day made a covenant with Abraham, saying, "Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." (Gen. 15: 18.)

It will be noticed from this that a larger territory was promised Abraham than is usually thought of when speaking of the land of Canaan. And it is interesting to note that even this larger territory was actually finally given to the seed of Abraham, and that they actually possessed it and enjoyed revenue from it. In the days of David we read, "David smote also Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his dominion at the River." (2 Sam. 8: 3.) The river here mentioned is Euphrates. David recovered his dominion. He could hardly *recover* a dominion never before possessed. But whether he possessed it before or not, he certainly won this campaign and drew revenue from the captives. Again it is said, "And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought tribute, and served Solomon all the days of his life." (1 Kings 4: 21.) These, together with the positive statement of Joshua that God had given "all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein," should settle the question about whether the land promise was fulfilled.

Context of the Lesson

For the material of this lesson we turn back a few years from that of our previous lesson. When Abraham had gone throughout the land, even to the south border, there was a famine in the land, and he decided to go to Egypt. Whether he was led of the Lord to go to Egypt, or it was a human decision, we may never know. From our point of view it seems that it would have been better for him to stay in the land the Lord gave him and depend on God to care for him, than to subject himself to the dangers and temptations he was sure to meet in Egypt. It was there that he practiced deception which constitutes about the only blot on his otherwise unusually pure record. But in spite of his dishonesty with Pharaoh he was dealt with in a kindly manner, and was given an escort to bring him and his possessions out of Egypt and on their way to their own land.

The Historical Background

TIME.—According to Adam Clarke, Abraham went into Egypt in 1920 B.C., and stayed there about two years, arriving back at Bethel (called Luz at that time) in 1918 B.C. His separation from Lot took place the next year, the time most of our Lesson Text is dated, 1917 B.C. The date for our reference in Acts is A.D. 31.

PLACES.—The places mentioned in our lesson are Egypt, Bethel, Sodom. And of Sodom it may be said that it was one of the most ancient cities of Syria; it is thought to have been the principal city of that section; and it was known in Abraham's day as an exceedingly wicked city. From all the conflicting things said, two things stand out fairly well established. First, the city was situated on the north to northeastern shore of the Dead Sea. Second, neither Sodom nor the cities mentioned in connection with it, nor the district around

were submerged in the Dead Sea, but the cities were overthrown and completely destroyed, and the land made desolate.

PERSONS.—God, Abraham, Lot, and Stephen are the persons in this lesson.

Golden Text Explained

All the land which thou seest. In Gen. 12: 8 we read, "He removed from thence unto the mountain on the east of Beth-el, and pitched his tent, having Beth-el on the west, and Ai on the east." When he returned from Egypt it is said he went "even to Beth-el, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Beth-el and Ai." (Gen. 13: 3.) Bethel is twelve miles north of Jerusalem. This put Abraham on an elevation from which a large section of country could be seen, but even at that he could not see all the land contained in the promise. This may have been said in contrast with what is said about Lot's lifting up his eyes and viewing the plain of the Jordan and seeing that it was well watered. Though it was a rich section, yet Abraham was to be given all he could see, the expanse of which would more than make up for the fertility of the Jordan valley.

To thee will I give it. This too may be viewed in the light of a contrast with Lot's choice. Lot had no claim to possession of any of the Jordan valley, except as he might buy it. But for his magnanimous attitude toward Lot, Abraham was to be given all the land he could see.

A question has been raised about the fulfillment of this promise, since Stephen said God gave him no inheritance in the land. And some go so far as to say that Abraham will have to be raised from the dead and live in Canaan in actual possession of the land before it can be said that the promise is completely fulfilled. This is foolish, for if all the land had been given immediately to Abraham, there was entirely too much of it for him to use. The promise was made in favor of his posterity, and even when God brought them into it they possessed only that portion needed. God said, "I will not drive them out from before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beasts of the field multiply against thee. By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land." (Ex. 23: 29, 30.) If the beasts of the field would multiply against over two million people, and the land become desolate if given to them all at once, what would happen if all that land had been given to Abraham in his lifetime? He lived in it and enjoyed it; what more could anybody ask?

These people who say Abraham is to be raised from the dead that the promise may be fulfilled have another problem. God promised to give the land to Abraham and *to his seed after him.* The promise says his seed *after* him; not before him. If the seed is to possess the land after Abraham possesses it, when will they possess it? It is claimed that Abraham will possess it during the millennium, so his seed will have to be raised and possess it after that age. But this will ruin their whole theory. The truth is that the promise was made to the posterity through Abraham, and he was counted as possessing the wealth and glory of his seed after him.

Helps on the Lesson Text

Lot chose all the Plain of the Jordan. When their herds became too great for the land, and their herdsmen quarreled, Abraham did the unselfish thing, saying, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, . . . for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou take the right hand, then I will go to the left." It is better to suffer wrong than to live in strife. Brethren who do not get what they want in church decisions would do well to learn this lesson.

And moved his tent as far as Sodom. This act of Lot has always been considered (1) an indication of selfishness. When given the chance to choose, he took the best; (2) it was an indication of worldliness. He was looking for worldly advantages. He had his mind set on things of this world instead of heavenly things; (3) he lost the company of God's people. No amount of material wealth can make up for the loss of Christian fellowship in our battle against temptations; (4) he subjected his family to sinful environment in order to make money. And again, no amount of material gain can pay for the loss of a child through sinful associations; (5) at first his choice seemed wise, but Lot lived to regret it, on his own account and that of his family. (2 Pet. 2: 6-9.)

I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth. This promise is said to have been "after that Lot was separated from him." Some link this with the statement first made to Abraham to get away from his kindred. He left some in Ur, others in Haran, and now that Lot is gone, Abraham is completely separated from his kindred as God wished him to be. Whether it was so intended or not, it is true that he was completely separated from his kindred before the heir was given him, or before the covenant was sealed. But it may be that this promise was given him at this time as a reward for his generosity to Lot in offering him what had been promised, and therefore in reality belonged to him. This superlative "dust of the earth" to express the number of his posterity is not to be taken literally, but as denoting a number beyond counting.

For unto thee will I give it. We have three forms of this promise: (1) the land is promised to Abraham; (2) the land is promised to Abraham and his seed after him. (Gen. 17: 8.); (3) the land is promised to his seed. (Gen. 15: 18.) And we nave the same three forms of the seed promise. To Abraham it was said, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12: 3.) Next, to Jacob it was said, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 28: 14.) And then, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 22: 18.) With this seed promise we have no trouble understanding that the blessing is actually in Christ, the seed of Abraham, and only in Abraham because of his connection with Christ. We ought to understand the land promise in the same way—that the promise of actual possession was made to the seed of Abraham, and to him personally only because of his connection with that posterity.

And he gave him none inheritance in it. As we have seen the promise was not that Abraham would personally have actual possession of the land, any more than the seed promise was to be fulfilled in him personally. So the promise neither failed, nor is to be fulfilled

in the future. Stephen tells us when it was time for the promise to be fulfilled. "But as the time of the promise drew nigh which God vouchsafed unto Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt." (Acts 7: 17.) From this we learn the time for the promise to be fulfilled was when the people grew and multiplied in Egypt. But what promise was this? the seed promise, "In thy seed shall all the families be blessed?" Certainly not. That promise was not fulfilled until the coming of Christ. (Gal. 3: 16.) It was time for the land promise to be fulfilled, the one made to Abraham. So when the people grew and multiplied to that extent they could possess the land and hold it against the beasts of the field and their enemies, it was time for God to fulfill his promise to give the land.

His seed should sojourn in a strange land. God told Abraham about the bondage 1911 B.C. (Gen. 15: 13), and three hundred years later the Pharaoh who knew not Joseph arose and began to enslave the people. (Ex. 1: 8.) It is said that they would be in bondage four hundred years. But Paul tells us it was only four hundred and thirty from the time the promise was made to Abraham until the law of Moses was given. (Gal. 3: 17.) In Ex. 12: 41 the time of the sojourn in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. The passage is admittedly difficult. The Samaritan Pentateuch here reads, "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, and of their fathers, which they sojourned in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years." And the Alexandrian copy of the Septuagint reads the same way, according to Adam Clarke. As this agrees with Paul and the chronology of the Old Testament, we must presume it to be correct. Abraham had been in Canaan twenty-five years when Isaac was born; Isaac was sixty years old when Jacob was born; and Jacob was one hundred and thirty years old when he went to Egypt. Adding these we get two hundred and fifteen years from the time Abraham entered Canaan until the Jews went to Egypt. Another two hundred and fifteen years spent in Egypt, and we have the four hundred and thirty years from the promise to the giving of the law.

And that nation . . . will I judge. This is a part of the statement of God to Abraham when he foretold the Egyptian bondage, which Stephen quoted. The judgment consisted partly in the ten plagues brought upon Egypt to get Pharaoh to let the people go. And the destruction of the army which attempted to follow the Jews through the Red Sea at the time of their deliverance is part of that judgment. Stephen said the "time of the promise drew nigh." The promise was to give them the land. Now we see that they were to serve God in the land, and it was to be after his judgment upon Egypt. If this land promise is not yet fulfilled, but is yet to be given to resurrected Abraham and his seed, must Egypt be restored, bring the people again into bondage so the people can claim the promise and serve God in the land *after* God judges that nation for enslaving his people? There seems to be no end to the embarrassing positions one can get himself into on account of a false doctrine.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

The generosity of Abraham in his treatment of Lot, and the selfishness of Lot in taking what seemed to him the best part of the

country, furnish excellent material for lessons in these departments. And the goodness of God to Abraham in shielding him from such experiences as Lot suffered illustrate God's goodness to people who love him, trust, and obey him.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The above lessons can easily be adapted to these departments and should have a large share of the emphasis. A warning against the type of worldliness of Lot and encouragement to cultivate the heavenly mindedness of Abraham will also be in place. And the example of giving others their desires as a means of preserving peace should find a place in these departments. Young people are too prone to demand their own way, and to think the opposite course followed by Abraham as effeminate. But several good texts can be found in the Sermon on the Mount to show that Jesus teaches us to live this way.

Young People and Adult Departments

The warning against worldliness and encouragement to cultivate Abraham's type of heavenly mindedness should have a place in the lesson for these departments. And in adult classes stress should be laid on taking care to refrain from taking one's family into ungodly environment for the sake of making a big salary.

In adult classes Abraham's method of preserving peace should be stressed. It should be used in our homes today; it would keep many couples out of the divorce courts. It would be a good course to pursue in settling church troubles, and the application should be made by the teacher in such way that church leaders will be impressed, and that prospective church leaders will build this trait into their characters.

The question of the restoration of the Jews to the land of Canaan should be given some time in these classes. People need to know the truth on such live issues.

Topics for Discussion

1. Here are some thoughts suggested by pitching one's tent toward Sodom. (1) Any wrong or selfish act, unforsaken, will naturally draw us toward evil. (2) There are a great many outward attractions toward sin. They are like some oriental cities, shining with marble and gold in the distance, but within are full of all manner of vileness. (3) The approach to great sins is gradual. The innocent never rush into them; their repulsion is overcome little by little. "They first endure, then pity, then embrace." (4) Indulging in doubtful pleasures, and things that appeal solely to the flesh is to turn toward spiritual Sodom. (5) One who pitches his tent *toward* Sodom will soon find himself living in the city, even as Lot.

2. From the hardheaded businessman's view Lot drove a shrewd trade, got the best of the bargain. But in the long run Abraham profited most. Lot lost all in his selfishness; Abraham gained all by his unselfishness. Unselfishness for the Lord's sake still pays the biggest dividends known to man, yet there are few investors.

3. Some scriptures illustrated (1) in Abraham's action—Rom. 12: 10, preferring others; 1 Cor. 13: 4-8, love suffers long, etc; Rom. 12: 18, 21, live peaceably; Heb. 13: 1; Ps. 133; Matt. 6: 31-34; Phil. 2: 4-10. (2) In Lot's way—1 Cor. 5: 9-11; 2 Thess. 3: 6, 14, 15; 1 Cor. 15: 33; Ps. 1: 1; Prov. 1: 10-16; 13: 20; 2 Cor. 6: 14-18.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What thoughts are suggested in the Devotional Reading?
What is the central thought in all the daily Bible readings?
Was the land mentioned in the first promise to Abraham?
What were the boundaries of the land promised?
At what time was all this land actually in possession of the Jews?
Tell of Abraham's experiences when he left his homeland.
What do you know of Sodom?
Where was Abraham when he and Lot separated?
Did God ever promise Abraham actual literal possession of the land?
Could Abraham possibly have possessed and used all the land promised?
What can you say of Lot's choice of a place to live?
What was God's promise to Abraham concerning his posterity?
In what sense was the land promised to Abraham? Illustrate by seed promise.
What did Stephen say about the time for the fulfillment of the promise?
How long was Abraham's seed in bondage? Harmonize the records.
How did God judge the nation that enslaved them?
What lessons are suggested by pitching one's tent toward Sodom?
What lessons do you learn from No. 3 Topics for Discussion?

Lesson IV—January 25, 1948

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ISAAC

The Lesson Text

Gen. 26: 1-6, 12-17, 23-25

1 And there was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Ī'săac went unto Ă-bĭm'ĕ-lĕch king of the Phĭl-ĭs'tĭnes, unto Gē'rär.
2 And Jĕ-hō'văh appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Ē'gĭpt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of.
3 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father;
4 And I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these lands; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;
5 Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.
6 And Ī'săac dwelt in Gē'rär:

. . . . . .

12 And Ī'săac sowed in that land, and found in the same year a hundredfold: and Jĕ-hō'văh blessed him.
13 And the man waxed great, and grew more and more until he became very great:
14 And he had possessions of flocks, and possessions of herds, and a great household: and the Phĭ-lĭs'tĭnes envied him.
15 Now all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Phĭ-lĭs'tĭnes had stopped, and filled with earth.
16 And Ă-bĭm'ĕ-lĕch said unto Ī'săac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we.
17 And Ī'săac departed thence, and encamped in the valley of Gē'rär, and dwelt there.

. . . . . .

23 And he went up from thence to Bē'ĕr-shē'bá.

24 And Jē-hō'văh appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake.
25 And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of Jē-hō'văh, and pitched his tent there: and there I'săac's servants digged a well.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"For in Isaac shall thy seed be called."* (Gen. 21: 12b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Heb. 11: 17-20.

Daily Bible Readings

January 19. M.....The Birth of Isaac. (Gen. 21: 1-7)
January 20. T.....Isaac is Offered (Gen. 22: 1-19)
January 21. W.....Bride Sought for Isaac (Gen. 24: 1-28)
January 22. T.....Bride's Family Consent (Gen. 24: 29-49)
January 23. F.....Isaac is Comforted (Gen. 24: 50-67)
January 24. S.....Isaac Buries his Father (Gen. 25: 1-11)
January 25. S.....Isaac, a Man of Peace (Gen. 26: 18-22, 26-33)

Lesson Subject Explained

The covenant made with Isaac is not a new covenant, nor does it differ in the least from that which was made with Abraham. It is simply the renewal of the covenant already made. It was letting Isaac know that God's dealings would be with him as the son of promise of Abraham, and not with Ishmael. The Lord said, "I will establish" the oath made to Abraham. We are told that the word translated establish is a Hebrew word which means *will cause to stand up,* and is commonly used when speaking of divine promises being fulfilled. (Bush's *Notes.*) David identifies them as the same in these words, "He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations, the covenant which he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac, and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a statute, to Israel for an everlasting covenant, saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance." (Ps. 105: 8-11.) The promise to give the land of Canaan was to Abraham a *covenant,* to Isaac it was an *oath,* and to Jacob it was a *statute.*

Context of the Lesson

There is quite a skip between this lesson and our last. The birth and offering of Isaac have happened. And the touching scene of the death of Sarah, and Abraham's purchase of the cave of Machpelah as the family burying ground. This burying ground was at Hebron, Mamre, one of the first residences of Abraham in the land of Canaan. Then there follows, about four years later, the marriage of Isaac to Rebekah. Abraham was not willing for Isaac to marry one of the daughters of the land of Canaan, so he sent his faithful servant back to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor, which perhaps means the city where Nahor, Abraham's brother, lived. There he found Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, the granddaughter of Nahor, the great-granddaughter of Terah. Arrangements were made according to the customs of the east at that time for her to leave her home to become the wife of her wealthy kinsman. Isaac was forty years old at the time of his marriage. (Gen. 25: 20.)

Among the matters between our lessons there is the account of Abraham's marriage to Keturah. Whether this marriage took place after the death of Sarah, or before, we have no way of knowing. We

do know that Abraham had concubines, plural, and some are disposed to say Keturah was one of them. (Gen. 25: 6.) And Isaac and Rebekah had two sons, Jacob and Esau, born to them before the time of our lesson. Isaac was sixty years old at the time of their birth. (Gen. 25: 26.) And there follows the story of Esau despising, and Jacob buying for a mess of pottage, the birthright. This incident is a good index to the character of both men; Esau had little regard for things spiritual, and Jacob was a shrewd trader, willing and able to drive hard bargains.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The time of our lesson is given as 1804 B.C. Isaac was born 1896 B.C. He married in 1856 B.C. Jacob and Esau were born 1836 B.C. According to these dates Isaac was ninety-two years old at the time of our lesson.

PLACES.—Gerar and Beersheba. Gerar was a very ancient city south of Gaza, in the territory of the Philistines at that time. Abraham lived there at one time, and the king's name was Abimelech, though not the same person who was king when Isaac went there, as ninety-seven years had passed since Abraham's visit to that place. Smith's *Bible Dictionary* suggests that Isaac probably was born in Gerar.

Beersheba was northeast of Gerar, perhaps twenty-five miles, and just beyond the limit of the Philistines at that time. The word Beersheba means *well of swearing.* It was in this location that both Abraham and Isaac had trouble with the Philistines over water wells. Abraham reproved Abimelech because his men took a well by violence (Gen. 21: 25,) and Isaac quietly moved on to other locations when his wells were taken.

PERSONS.—God, Isaac, Abimelech, and Philistines.

Golden Text Explained

In Isaac shall thy seed be called. This was said to Abraham at a time when there was trouble in the family. Isaac was old enough to be weaned from his mother, and as was the custom there was a celebration. Ishmael was tantalizing the child, and Sarah resented it. Having endured it for some years, Sarah reached the breaking point and demanded that Abraham get rid of Hagar and Ishmael. Abraham hesitated to deal so harshly, and maybe would not have done so, but God said, "Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy handmaid; in all that Sarah saith unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called." In this connection the reader should read Paul's lesson in Gal. 4: 21-31 based on this incident.

Though Ishmael and his twelve sons, and their children, were of the flesh of Abraham, they were rejected, not in reference to personal salvation, but from being in the ancestral line of Christ. The choice of Isaac had nothing to do with the saving of his soul; and the rejection of Ishmael did not mean the damnation of his soul.

Paul used this to illustrate a point to the Jews of his day. (Rom. 9: 6-13.) "For they are not all Israel, that are of Israel: neither, because they are Abraham's seed, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, it is not the children of the flesh that are

children of God; but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed." Not all the children of the flesh of Abraham had a part in the covenant of old, for Ishmael and his children were rejected. By this argument Paul established the fact that fleshly descent was not alone sufficient to guarantee covenant blessings. His application is that fleshly connection with Abraham is not enough to guarantee covenant blessings today. This was directed against the Jews who depended on their connection with Abraham to gain them the favor of God. As Ishmael, though connected by flesh to Abraham, was rejected, so the Jews today, though connected by flesh to Abraham, are rejected if they do not accept Christ. Ishmael's rejection had nothing to do with his personal salvation, therefore, it was unconditional; but the rejection of the Jews to whom Paul wrote did mean the loss of personal salvation, therefore it was conditional. If they would accept Christ, as Paul did, they would be spiritual seed of Abraham and among the chosen of God; but if they rejected Christ and depended on their fleshly relation to Abraham, God would reject them and deny them any covenant blessings. This is still the condition of orthodox Jews of today, for which reason they are without God, strangers from the covenant of promise, and without hope in this world.

Helps on the Lesson Text

Go not down into Egypt. Whether God told Abraham to go to Egypt from the famine mentioned in verse one we do not know. But he thought it of sufficient importance to Isaac that he made a special appearance to him to tell him not to go. It would be idle to speculate on why Isaac should not go, but it does remind us that the nature and strength of character of some people make it possible for them to go places and do things without danger, when it would be the downfall of others to do the same thing.

I will be with thee, and will bless thee. This promise followed the command to sojourn "in this land," so we may conclude that Isaac could go to Egypt to enjoy freedom from famine if he wished, but it would cost him the favor and blessing of God. But he was assured that if he would stay in the land, he would be under the blessing of God. Isaac was wise to choose God as his source of supply during the time of famine in preference to Egypt. This problem is as old as humanity. Jesus tells us to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all the temporal things of life will be added. But many refuse to depend on his promise and they turn to Egypt, the human source, for the supply of their needs. The blessings God promised Isaac consisted of three things.

Unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these lands. This is the first part of the blessing, and is but the confirmation of the original promise to give the land to Abraham and his seed after him.

I will multiply thy seed as the stars. This is the second item in the blessing promised Isaac. And this too is a part of that promise made to Abraham. God could not fulfill his promise to Abraham in this respect without making Isaac's seed numerous.

In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. And this is the third item of the promise God made to bless Isaac. God had said to Abraham when Isaac was very young, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. And now God confirms that promise to Isaac personally.

It must have been a source of great comfort and encouragement to know that he was to be used of the Lord for some great purpose. Whether Isaac understood the full import of this promise we can never know. If angels desired to look into these things, and prophets knew only that they spoke of things for the benefit of those who should live after them (1 Pet. 1: 10-12), we may suppose that Isaac did not know the full meaning of all these promises.

Because that Abraham obeyed my voice. These blessings were not to be given to Isaac because of his merits, but because of God's respect for Abraham. Not only was this true of Isaac, but all down through the ages God continued to say that he would do things for people for the sake of Abraham, and the fathers.

Kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws. It is difficult to make a clear-cut distinction between the meaning of these terms, and perhaps it is not intended that we should do so; but rather that we are to get the idea of Abraham's full and complete obedience to the will of God. Bush says *charge* is "a general term for whatever God commands or ordains for man's observance." Commandments refer to God's moral precepts; statutes refer to the ceremonial requirements; and laws "again are *authoritative instructions* relative to the doctrines and duties of religion in general."

Isaac sowed in that land, and . . . waxed great . . . Philistines envied him. Isaac is said to have reaped a hundredfold. This was an extra good increase, though not unknown or impossible as some commentators think. Jesus spoke of hundredfold increase in the parable of the sower. (Matt. 13: 3, 23.) But it is intended we should get the idea that God had a hand in the increase of his labors. Furthermore it is clear that his increase was greater than that of the Philistines about him, and was the cause of their envy. Notice the word *great.* Isaac became very great, not in character necessarily, but the word means much wealth. Nabal was a *very great man,* yet his wife said he was a *worthless fellow.* (1 Sam. 25: 2, 17.) Too many people today have the same idea of greatness.

Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we. These are the words of Abimelech to Isaac, and this is what envy drove him to say. There are few sins uglier than envy and jealousy, and perhaps none that will cause us to do uglier things. (James 3: 16.) Envy not only caused the king to say this, but it had caused his subjects to stop the wells which Abraham had dug and Isaac was using.

And Isaac departed . . . and he went up . . . to Beersheba. "Isaac does not insist on the bargain he had made with them for the lands he held, nor on his occupying and improving of them, nor does he offer to contest with them by force, though he was become very great; but very peaceably departs thence farther from the royal city, and perhaps to a part of the country less fruitful. Note, we shou'd deny ourselves both in our rights and in our conveniences, rather than quarrel: a wise and good man will rather retire in obscurity, like Isaac here into a valley, than sit high, to be the butt of envy and ill will." (M. Henry.)

And Jehovah appeared unto him . . . and he builded an altar there. When Isaac retired on account of wrong treatment, Jehovah appeared to him to tell him, "Fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee." God's blessing comes after one has been through the fiery trial. Isaac was not effeminate, nor was he aggressive and warlike. He cultivated the gentler virtues so rare in his day. It has been said of him that

he came nearer being what Christ demands of us than any man of his time. In response to God's goodness to him he built an altar. These faithful men of God refused to live in a p ace where there was no altar. Brethren today should refuse to live where they have not the privileges of worship. If they find themselves in such a place, it is their duty to build a place; and where that is impossible, move to a place where they can worship.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

At least the older section here can get the lesson that God has a plan in his mind which he is working out for the salvation of the world through Christ, and since Abraham is dead he is forwarding that plan through Isaac.

But the greater part of the time in these departments should be devoted to a study of the character of Isaac, and an effort to cultivate the same in the hearts of your students. Isaac was quiet, submissive, peace-loving, gentle in the conduct of his home affairs, and always maintained an altar for the worship of God. He preferred to lose his well, and even move elsewhere than have a fight with his enemies.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Again the emphasis should be on the character of Isaac. The fact that he sent back to his own people for a wife instead of taking one of the young women of Canaan should teach these young people the wisdom of marrying in the church. Isaac loved his mother so much that he refused to be comforted for four years, until his marriage. Love for mother, and tender filial respect and obedience is a mark of genuine greatness in a boy or girl; the absence of which is a mark of coarseness that high attainments in other lines cannot erase.

The lack of retaliation on the part of Isaac in the matter of the wells is a mark of Christlikeness. The Sermon on the Mount abounds with lessons similar to this, and it has been said that Isaac obeyed that sermon hundreds of years before it was preached.

Young People and Adult Departments

These departments should study the place of Isaac in the plan of God to bring the redeemer into the world, and how his choice did not affect the salvation of Ishmael; how God could choose him for that place and not be a respecter of persons. And they should be led to see that this is Paul's use of them in Rom. 9, and that Paul was not trying to prove that God can save some and damn others eternally without being a respecter of persons.

Practical lessons from the character of Isaac will also be in place. Nonresistance, marrying one of like religion and ideals, maintaining a place of worship, and staying within the limits of God's presence and blessings are lessons well worth-while in these departments.

Topics for Discussion

1. The road Isaac traveled toward prosperity (1) diligence, and (2) devotion.

2. Material prosperity can give one all the physical comforts

needed, but it sometimes brings mental discomforts in the form of envy, jealousy, and ill will of those about us.

3. Our earthly possessions can easily and quickly be spent in litigation defending our rights, when it might as honorably be preserved by practicing the doctrine of non-resistance preached and practiced by Jesus. Isaac might have gone to law with the Philistine herdsmen, and might have won his case in court, but he could never have won his way into the hearts of those peop'e.

4. The altar Isaac built was continual manifestation of his submission to God, his dependence upon God to care for him while he lived among enemies, his love for God, and his appreciation for the goodness of God manifested in his prosperity.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What lesson is suggested in the Devotional Reading?
What have you learned of Isaac from the daily Bible readings?
In what sense was this covenant made with Isaac?
What did David say of this covenant?
What are some of the lessons suggested in the context?
Discuss the time of this lesson as related to other events and persons.
What do you know of Gerar and Beersheba?
In connection with what incident did God speak the words of our Golden Text?
What use did Paul make of this statement?
Does the word call of this text have reference to our call to eternal life?
Since it was not wrong for Abraham to go to Egypt, would it have been wrong for Isaac?
Which is a better source of supply in time of need, God or rich land?
In what three ways did God promise to bless Isaac?
Did Isaac understand the full import of these promises?
Why did God thus bless Isaac?
Does God bless us on account of our merits, or on account of our relation to Christ?
What is a charge, a commandment, a statute, and a law?
What of Isaac's prosperity, and the attitude of the Philistines?
What of Isaac's attitude of non-resistance?
Can we be Christlike without it?
What lessons have you learned from Isaac's practice of building an altar?

Lesson V—February 1, 1948

GOD'S COVENANT WITH JACOB

The Lesson Text

Gen. 35: 5-15

5 And they journeyed: and a terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.

6 So Jacob came to Lūz, which is in the land of Cā'nāan (the same is Bĕth'-ĕl), he and all the people that were with him.

7 And he built there an altar, and called the place Ĕl-bĕth'ĕl; because there God was revealed unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother.

8 And Dĕb'ō-rāh Rē-bĕk'āh's nurse died, and she was buried below Bĕth'-ĕl under the oak: and the name of it was called Ăl'lŏn-băc'ŭth.
9 And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came from Păd'dăn-ā'răm, and blessed him.
10 And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Ĭs'rā-ĕl shall be thy name: and he called his name Ĭs'rā-ĕl.
11 And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins;
12 And the land which I gave unto Abraham and Ī'săac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.
13 And God went up from him in the place where he spake with him.
14 And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he spake with him, a pillar of stone: and he poured out a drink-offering thereon, and poured oil thereon.
15 And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bĕth'-ĕl.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel."* (Gen. 32: 28a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Gen. 48: 1-7.

Daily Bible Readings

January 26. M.....Jacob Gets the Birthright (Gen. 25: 27-34)
January 27. T.....Jacob Gets the Blessing (Gen. 27: 1-30)
January 28. W.....Jacob Goes to Paddan-aram (Gen. 28: 1-5)
January 29. T.....Jacob at Bethel (Gen. 28: 10-22)
January 30. F.....Jacob Meets Rachel (Gen. 29: 1-20)
January 31. S.....Jacob Marries (Gen. 29: 21-35)
February 1. S.....Jacob Wrestles With the Angel (Gen. 32: 22-32)

Lesson Subject Explained

The reader will see at a glance that these lessons are designed to trace the purpose of God from the founder of the nation through his posterity. Jacob is the son of Isaac, and the grandson of Abraham. In our last lesson we learned that Isaac was the only son of Abraham with whom God would deal in the matter of building the nation which was to fulfill the purposes of God in the redemption of mankind. Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. Again God made a choice between these, and Jacob is the man with whom God will deal. So God appeared to him, when his experiences had brought him into a proper frame of mind, to make his covenant with him. Again, we suggest that this is not a new covenant, but the renewing of a covenant. It was new in the sense that this is the first time it was made with Jacob. But it was a renewal in that it contains the same blessings, made for the same purpose, and in favor of the same nation of people to spring from Jacob.

Context of the Lesson

There is a lot of interesting history between our last lesson and this one. Some of it has been covered in the daily Bible readings for the week. Jacob through deception and willful lying, at the encouragement of his mother, stole the blessings from his father. Fearing trouble from Esau, he fled to Paddan-aram, where he met Rachel and worked seven years for her father that he might have her as his wife. Marriage customs were such that her father, Laban, could give him Leah without his knowing it until too late to do anything about it. When he complained to Laban about it, he was told that the younger might not marry before the older daughter, and Jacob

agreed to work another seven years for his beloved. However he was allowed to marry her a week later. Jacob had many trials in his dealings with the crafty Laban, as he himself expresses it: "These twenty years have I been in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy flock: and thou hast changed my wages ten times. Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now hadst thou sent me away empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight." (Gen. 31: 41, 42.) But these experiences, together with his wrestling with the angel of Jehovah at the Jabbok, made a different man from that which went away from Canaan.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date for our lesson is 1738 B.C. Jacob was born in 1836 B.C. He was at least fifty-seven years old when he went to Paddan-aram, and many claim that he was seventy-seven, the matter to be determined by the meaning of Gen. 31: 38, 41. If these verses cover only twenty years, he was seventy-seven when he went there; but if they are to be taken as two sets of twenty years, making forty years' stay in Paddan-aram, he was only fifty-seven when he went there. A learned discussion of the matter is given in Clarke's *Commentary* on that reference.

PLACES.—Paddan-aram and Luz, or Bethel. Paddan-aram means "the tableland of Aram," and was a section of the country east of the Euphrates River about six hundred miles northwest of Ur, and was north and a little east of Damascus. Haran, where Abraham stopped for a while on his journey to Canaan, was situated there. Nahor, Abraham's brother, stayed there when Abraham left to go to Canaan. And it was from his family that both Isaac and Jacob got their wives.

Luz, or Bethel, is the place where Jacob saw the ladder extending to heaven, with angels going up and down, and where he vowed to give a tenth to the Lord as long as he lived. However there seems to have been no town there at that time; it is said to be a place. Nor was there a town located there at the time of his second visit to the place. The town, when built, was a Canaanite town, and Luz seems to be the Canaanite name. Jacob called it by that name when he went to Egypt (Gen. 48: 3), so we conclude there was a town by that name at that time. However when the Israelites took possession of the land they called it by the name Jacob gave the place when he first visited there. (Judges 1: 23.)

PERSONS.—God, Jacob, and Deborah are the persons of this lesson.

Golden Text Explained

Thy name shall be called no more Jacob. The word *Jacob* means *supplanter.* We are told that the Hebrew word means *to defraud, deceive, to supplant.* The name seems to have been given on account of an incident in connection with his birth. The record says, "And after that came forth his brother, and his hand had hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob." (Gen. 25: 26.) And the prophet made mention of it as if it were of a prophetic nature, saying, "In the womb he took his brother by the heel; and in his manhood he had power with God." (Hos. 12: 3.) His dealings with Esau prove that

he was given the right name for his early life. He caught his brother hungry, so hungry that he despaired of his life, and refused to feed him until he had first given him the birthright. He was not satisfied with a gentleman's agreement either, for he forced him to swear to the transaction before he would give his brother food. (Gen. 25: 27-34.) And then when Isaac told Esau to go kill and prepare venison for a feast that he might give him the b essing, Jacob's mother heard and feared that Jacob might not get the blessing too. So she laid the plans for Jacob to deceive his father by dressing in Esau's clothes, putting skins on his wrists so as to appear as hairy as Esau, and prepared a feast before Esau could return. Thus Jacob supplanted Esau again.

But during his stay in Paddan-aram, and through fear of meeting his offended brother, Jacob had undergone some changes. He was a different man from what he was when he left Canaan twenty or perhaps forty years before. Though it is said that a man wrestled with Jacob, in later verses we see clearly that Jacob realized that the one with whom he was striving was not a human being. He refused to let go until he got a blessing, and he asked the one with whom he wrestled what was his name. The being told him he had striven with God, and had prevailed. And when the being left, Jacob said he had had seen God face to face. Realizing he was wrestling with God, he refused to let go until he had obtained the blessing for which he was asking. It was then that the angel changed his name from Jacob to Israel, which means *he who strives with God.* And the angel added, "and hast prevailed." This seems to be the blessing Jacob was asking. He was meeting an offended brother and was expecting trouble, maybe a battle. He was praying that he might prevail, that he might be successful in that meeting. He prevailed in that meeting with Esau. His posterity are known as Israelites, not as Jacobites. And his spiritual seed, the heirs of the promise, are known as the true Israelites.

Helps on the Lesson Text

A terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them. This was a terror from God, sent upon the tribes round about, for the safe journey of Jacob through the territory. There were at least two things which might contribute to his need of such protection from God. First, Jacob's sons had murdered all the males of a city as retaliation for the humbling of their sister. (Gen. 34.) The surrounding tribes might well avenge this uncalled for cruelty. Next, Jacob was driving a lot of cattle and sheep through the country, and it would have been a rich prize for some of the tribes to consolidate their forces and kill Jacob and his family and take the stock.

So Jacob came to Luz . . . the same is Bethel. Smith's *Bible Dictionary* says Luz was built later. There was no city there, merely a place which Jacob called Bethel because there he saw God in his dream. The word Bethel means *the house of God.* Later the Canaanites built the city. Several hundred years later this history was written and the writer calls the place Luz, the Canaanite name, or Bethel, the name given the place by Jacob.

And Deborah Rebekah's nurse died. How did Rebekah's nurse come to be with the family of Jacob? She was given Rebekah one hundred and sixteen years before when she left her home to go to

become the wife of Isaac. (Gen. 24: 59.) Perhaps she had gone back to Paddan-aram, and had served in the home of Jacob because of her connection with him in his youth. But regardless of how she came to be in Jacob's family, this mention of her is evidence of her character. Why would a family weep so at the death of a servant unless that servant had endeared herself to them through the years by unusually faithful and efficient service in the proper spirit? The place where she was buried they named Allon-bacuth, which means *the oak of weeping.* She had only the place of a servant, but she used it in such way as to endear herself to the family, and to deserve mention in a record that will never perish. If she could do so well with so little, what will be expected of us?

And God said unto him. It is interesting to note that God said nothing to Jacob at this time which he had not previously said to him. The first thing here is the change of names. This change took place sometime before at the ford of the Jabbok where he wrestled with the angel. The next thing said here is concerning the multiplying of his seed, and this promise was made to him at Bethel when he was fleeing from Esau on his way to Paddan-aram. (Gen. 28: 14.) The next thing was the promise of the land. And this was promised him at Bethel. And there is one thing said at Bethel which is not here repeated, and that is the seed promise, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

And God went up from him. This suggests that there was a visible manifestation of God on this occasion. Practically every time we read of God, Jehovah, appearing and talking with these patriarchs it can be shown that it was the second person of the Godhead, which afterwards became flesh and dwelt among men. Jacob said that it was the God of Abraham, or the angel that redeemed him from all evil. Hosea says this angel that appeared to Jacob was Jehovah the God of hosts. (Hos. 12: 3-5.) The second person was the active agent in the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage.

And Jacob set up a pillar. The setting up of such pillars was to commemorate the appearance of God; it was an act of worship commemorating the communion with God, and expressing appreciation for the strength and encouragement gained from the visitation. The "drink-offering" he poured out was wine. It was a sacrifice and expressive of one's devotion to God and dependence upon him. The pouring of oil on the stone was Jacob's way of devoting or consecrating the place to Jehovah. Oil was generally used for consecrating purposes. When people were anointed for special services the oil of consecration was used. Priests, kings and prophets were anointed with oil.

Jacob called the name of the place . . . Bethel. This is the name Jacob gave the place years before when he was on his way to Paddan-aram. (Gen. 28: 19.) But since he was alone at that time, no one knew of this name. Now that his sons and their families are along, the naming of the place will likely be kept in memory. And from subsequent history we know that the community built there did wear that name.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

The character of Jacob will necessarily furnish most of the material for these departments, along with incidents in his life. Our Golden Text comes from a passage in which the story of Jacob's ladder is told. This is always a source of interest to children. They will love to tell the story themselves as well as hear the teacher tell it. And from this story these lessons can be gained. (1) That God is present everywhere. It is impossible for us to go anywhere on this earth where God does not and cannot see us. From this they can learn to refrain from evil because God will see them, and they can learn the fact that God can care for us regardless of where we are, and so put their trust in him. (2) They can learn that God will bless them when and as long as they do right. It matters not whether they are farmers or missionaries, preachers or storekeepers, God will prosper them in what they do if they live righteous lives. (3) As Jacob vowed to give a tenth of all his money to God, so we today should learn to give back to him a portion for the spread of the gospel and care of the poor.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

It will be good to devote quite some time in these departments to the history connecting this lesson with the last. There is much interesting and instructive material between these lessons, and these departments will have more interest in these incidents and the lessons suggested by them than in the fact that Jacob was the one God chose to be in the covenant line between Abraham and Jesus Christ.

Some time should be given to the change of names and the corresponding change in the character of Jacob. God did not use Jacob for the high and holy purposes until he became a better man than he was when he took the birthright away from his brother and stole the blessing. So we need not expect God to use us for anything great and holy unless we keep ourselves free from ungodliness.

Young People and Adult Departments

It will be well for these departments to review the history of the covenant from the first time mentioned to Abraham up to this lesson. Care should be taken to keep the land promise and the seed promise separated, as well as learning with which of these covenants circumcision was connected. Out of which one of these promises grew the law of Moses, and out of which came the gospel?

It is also worth while to review the history between this lesson and the one preceding. Only in that way can the character of Jacob be known and appreciated.

The geography of the section of country covered in this lesson will be of interest. A good map will help.

Topics for Discussion

1. In Gen. 35: 1 we learn that God told Jacob to go back to Bethel. Had Jacob forgotten the experiences of his former visit? Did he need to be reminded of his vow which he made there twenty or forty years before? It surely was necessary for him to return or the Lord

would not have told him to do so. It does us good to return occasionally to the scenes of other days, to remember the youthful devotion, the pure love and deep consecration of the first years of our service to God. Have we drifted? Have we left our first love? Revisit the scenes of your first years as a Christian.

2. In Gen. 35: 4 we see Jacob getting rid of all the strange gods his family had brought along before his return to Bethel. Had Jacob worshiped these gods? He had at least allowed his family to do so. But now that he is to return to Bethel, the house of Jehovah, there is no place for these gods. So we must "Break down every idol," give up everything which tends to come between us and God. He demands first place in our lives, and first place means, not that we may reserve a place for a second, but that we must give him all our heart; he demands all, or asks for none.

3. God put fear in the hearts of the people around, so that Jacob and his family went through the land in perfect safety. When we put our trust in God we may not fear what men shall do unto us.

4. "Faithful servants should be tenderly cherished by their masters when old, decently buried when dead, and lovingly remembered when entombed." Though we have not servants in the sense in which Deborah was a servant, yet we should not look down upon people who do menial service. We should remember that it was to such servants Paul was writing when he said if they conducted themselves aright they would adorn the gospel of Christ. (Tit. 2: 10.)

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What thoughts are suggested in the Devotional Reading?
What lessons have you learned from the daily Bible readings?
In what sense was this covenant made with Jacob?
Why did Jacob go to Paddan-aram, and where is that country?
How did Jacob look upon his years of service and association with Laban?
What is the time of our lesson? How old was Jacob at this time?
How many of Jacob's kindred do you know lived in Paddan-aram?
What do you know of Luz, or Bethel?
What is the meaning of the name Jacob, and why was it given this person?
How did Jacob prove the name was well chosen?
What is the meaning of the name Israel, and why was it given?
For what two reasons might Jacob fear the people about him?
Why did he have a safe uneventful journey?
Who was Deborah, and what is your estimate of her character?
Compare the things God said to Jacob this time with what he had said at other meetings.
What person of the Godhead made these appearances, sometimes in human form?
What was the meaning of setting up pillars?
What was the meaning of pouring on wine and oil?
For what religious purposes was oil generally used?
Why should Jacob again call the name of this place Bethel?
What lessons have you learned from the topics for discussion?

Lesson VI—February 8, 1948

THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

The Lesson Text

Gen. 35: 23-26

23 The sons of Lē'ăh: Reu'bĕn, Jacob's first-born, and Sĭm'ĕ-ŏn, and Lē'vī, and Jū'dăh, and Ĭs'să-chär, and Zĕb'ū-lŭn;
24 The sons of Rā'chĕl: Joseph and Bĕn'jă-mĭn;
25 And the sons of Bĭl'hăh, Rā'chĕl's handmaid: Dan and Năph'tă-lī;
26 And the sons of Zĭl'păh, Lē'ăh's handmaid: Gad and Ăsh'ĕr: these are the sons of Jacob, that were born to him in Păd'dăn-ā'răm.

Ex. 1: 1-7

1 Now these are the names of the sons of Ĭs'rā-ĕl, who came into Ĕ'gypt (every man and his household came with Jacob):
2 Reu'bĕn, Sĭm'ĕ-ŏn, Lē'vī, and Jū'dăh,
3 Ĭs'să-chär, Zĕb'ū-lŭn, and Bĕn'jă-mĭn,
4 Dan and Năph'tă-lī, Gad and Ăsh'ĕr.
5 And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: and Joseph was in Ĕ'gypt already.
6 And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.
7 And the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"And there was not one feeble person among his tribes."* (Ps. 105: 37b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Gen. 49: 28-33.

Daily Bible Readings

February 2. M.....Ephraim and Manasseh Adopted (Gen. 48: 8-22)
February 3. T.....Blessings Pronounced (Gen. 49: 1-12)
February 4. W.....Blessings Continued (Gen. 49: 13-27)
February 5. T.....Strength of Tribes at Exodus (Num. 1: 20-46)
February 6. F.....Their Strength Forty Years Later (Num. 26: 5-27)
February 7. S.....Comparative Strength Continued (Num. 26: 28-51)
February 8. S.....Tribes Named by John (Rev. 7: 4-17)

Lesson Subject Explained

By the twelve tribes of Israel is meant all the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob, except the children of Esau, the son of Isaac. Jacob had twelve sons, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun were the sons of Leah, the wife given first to Jacob. She had a handmaid, Zilpah, who bore Jacob two sons, Gad and Asher. And Rachel, Jacob's beloved wife and sister to Leah, had two sons, Joseph and Benjamin. She also had a handmaid, Bilhah, who bore two sons, Dan and Naphtali. The descendants of each of these sons constituted a tribe.

But the reader will see in Monday's daily Bible reading that Jacob adopted the sons of Joseph, putting them on equal footing with each of the other tribes. Since these two, Ephraim and Manasseh, take the place of Joseph, there would naturally be thirteen tribes instead of twelve. But the tribe of Levi was given no inheritance (Num. 1: 47; 18: 23, 24; 26: 62), so this made it necessary to make only twelve divisions of the land. It is interesting to note that when John named the tribes, when 144,000 from all the tribes were sealed to God, he omitted Dan and Ephraim, while Joseph and Manasseh are both named. It is thought Dan and Ephraim were not included on account of their determined inclination to idolatry.

Context of the Lesson

Following Jacob's experiences as related in our last lesson at Bethel, we find him moving on to Ephrath, which is another name for Bethlehem. It was here and at this time that Benjamin was born. Rachel called his name Benoni, which means *the son of my sorrow*. Rachel did not live long after the birth of Benjamin, not recovering, it seems, from the illness incident to the birth of the child. Jacob set up a pillar which marked her grave for many years, even unto the day of the writing of Genesis. Some time after this Jacob made another move, going to Eder, which was not very far, some saying only a mile.

The context of the second section of our Lesson Text is far removed. The children of Israel have multiplied, gone into Egypt where they were favored by the Pharaoh whom Joseph served, but were enslaved by his successor; and they have been so ill-treated that they are no longer able to bear their burdens. They are calling upon God to give them deliverance. And the book of Exodus was written to tell us of that deliverance, the formation of the nation, the giving of the laws which were to govern them, and some of the experiences they had while going to that land promised to them through their father, the founder of the nation, Abraham.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date for the first section of our lesson is 1738 B.C. The date of Israel going into Egypt is 1706 B.C. Joseph died in 1635 B.C. The Pharaoh who knew not Joseph began to reign about 1604 B.C., and deliverance came in 1491 B.C.

PLACES.—Ephrath, Eder, and Egypt. The word Ephrath probably means *fruitful*. It is another name for Bethlehem, which means *house of bread*. It was situated just six miles south of Jerusalem, which was known as Salem in the time of Jacob.

The next place, Eder, is said by Adam Clarke probably to be about a mile from Ephrath. But the only other mention of the place in the Bible is in Josh. 15: 21, where it is said to be one of the towns "toward the border of Edom in the South." Nothing further is known of its location, and it has not been identified by any modern writer or identified as being the ancient location of any modern city. Some have suggested that Arad may be the location, but this is admitted to be a guess, and very questionable.

Golden Text Explained

Our Golden Text must be viewed as, in reality it is, a part, or one item, of a number of things God did for the people of Israel when they left Egypt for Canaan. God had commanded that all the people should go, even the children and the aged. To go on such a journey would require that they be in good health. Not only all the people were to go, but all their cattle. Moses said to Pharaoh, "Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not a hoof be left behind." (Ex. 10: 26.) Old cattle poorly fed would find it impossible to travel in the desert, with long hard marches between feedings.

The fact that there was not one feeble person among his tribes can be attributed to God's special providence, and to that alone. The God who commanded them to go made them able to go. But this is

is told rather fully, the favorite of his father, envied by his brothers, sold into Egypt, imprisoned on false moral charges, interpreted dreams and was made second only to Pharaoh, provided a refuge for his family in the time of famine are the high points in his history. Jacob gave more space to him in his blessing than to any two others except for the space to Judah. He ascribes the protection and greatness of Joseph to "the Mighty One of Jacob." His tribe numbered 40,500 at the Exodus for Ephraim and 32,200 for Manasseh; and forty years later Ephraim numbered 32,500 and Manasseh 52,700.

Benjamin was the twelfth son of Jacob, and the second son of Rachel. The name means *son of the right hand*, though some give it *son of old age*. Jacob speaks of him as a ravenous wolf, devouring the prey. His tribe grew from 35,400 at the Exodus to 45,600 as they went into Canaan.

All the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls. Some have thought this a contradiction to Stephen's statement that Jacob and all his kindred who went to Egypt numbered seventy-five. (Acts 7: 14.) But Jacob and his children and grandchildren (those who came out of his loins) numbered sixty-six. There were nine of his sons who had wives (not of Jacob's loins, but his kindred) which would make the number seventy-five. For a good discussion of the matter the reader may see Clarke's Commentary on Gen. 46: 20.

The children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly. Adam Clarke says the word *increased* here means *increased like fishes*. This denotes an unusually rapid rate of increase. This must have been the case, for in two hundred and fifteen years at most, they grew from seventy-five in number to around three million. If each of the 600,000 men of war had a wife and three children we would have three million, which seems to be a safe estimate when many families, like Jacob's, had twelve and more children. Early marriages and prolonged productivity under the providence of God could easily account for that many in so few years.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Stories from the life of Joseph will be of more interest to these children than the facts and figures which contribute to our knowledge of the founding of a nation. The long move from Canaan to Egypt of seventy-five people to prevent starvation, and their final enslavement will be of interest to them. Joseph's willingness to care for his brothers who sold him into slavery affords a good opportunity to teach lessons needed at this age.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

It will not be too much to ask students of these departments to memorize the names of the twelve sons of Jacob. Write the names of his wives on the board and list the names of the sons born of each opposite her name. From the book of Numbers, chapters one and twenty-six the relative strength of the tribes can be learned, and from Genesis 49 Jacob's blessings can be learned. With a little time spent a good blackboard lesson can be worked out that will hold the attention of the students, and be profitable to them.

Young People and Adult Departments

The suggestions made above are applicable here. Added material for the lesson can be found in Bible Dictionaries on each of the sons of Jacob. Adam Clarke's *Commentary* also has good material on each of the sons of Jacob, and concerning the tribes of which they are heads. There are other explanations of the difference between the figures given by Stephen and Moses as to the number of people who went into Egypt, and it would be of interest to these departments to consider them.

Topics for Discussion

1. Jacob blessed the world through a large family. Though our chances for disappointments and sorrows are increased by a large family, our responsibilities for happiness, honor, and service to humanity are multiplied. He who escapes life's responsibilities is also denied much of the joys and honors which come in life.

2. Jacob was guided by inspiration to say something about the future of each boy. But Jacob's statement did not determine what each boy's future must be. God foreknows the future of all of us; with him the future is well known as the present or past. But God's foreknowledge does not take away man's opportunity to work out his own destiny. The life and character of Jacob's sons were just what they would have been if Jacob had never said a word.

3. Joseph was in Egypt already; he was at the place where he could serve best. God had sent him on before to preserve the life of the family. (Gen. 45: 7, 8.) If we prepare ourselves to serve, and keep ourselves fit in character to serve, we will be at the place where service needs to be rendered. God always has a place for prepared characters to serve. It is our business under the providence of God to be ready for service.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What lesson do you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from daily Bible readings about the adoption of Joseph's sons?
What did you learn about the list of tribes as given in Revelation?
Who were the wives of Jacob, and how many sons did each bear?
What was the portion of the tribe of Levi?
Which son of Jacob was born at Bethlehem?
What name did his mother give him? Why?
Discuss the context of the lesson.
What dates in this lesson are of interest?
What is said of the places connected with this lesson?
What is said of the condition of the people during the march?
In what other ways did God care for the people?
What two reasons did David give for this providential care?
What lessons do you get from this that are applicable to us?
Who was Jacob's first-born? Did he get the birthright? Why?
Discuss each son as to what Jacob said in his blessing, and as to the place the tribe held in the nation as compared to the others.
How many souls went into Egypt?
How long were they in Egypt? How long in bondage?
How many able men came out of Egypt? How many people in all?
How account for such rapid increase from so small a number?

Lesson VII—February 15, 1948

JOSEPH'S PLACE IN ISRAEL'S HISTORY

The Lesson Text

Gen. 50: 15-26

15 And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, It may be that Joseph will hate us, and will fully requite us all the evil which we did unto him.
16 And they sent a message unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying,
17 So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the transgression of thy brethren, and their sin, for that they did unto thee evil. And now, we pray thee, forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him.
18 And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we are thy servants.
19 And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God?
20 And as for you, ye meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.
21 Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.
22 And Joseph dwelt in Ē'ĝŷpt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived a hundred and ten years.
23 And Joseph saw Ē'phrăĭm's children of the third generation: the children also of Mā'chĭr the son of Mā-năs'sĕh were born upon Joseph's knees.
24 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die; but God will surely visit you, and bring you up out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Ĭ'săac, and to Jacob.
25 And Joseph took an oath of the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.
26 So Joseph died, being a hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Ē'ĝŷpt.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a fountain; his branches run over the wall."* (Gen. 49: 22.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Gen. 37: 5-11.

Daily Bible Readings

February 9. M.....Joseph Despised by His Brothers (Gen. 37: 12-24)
February 10. T.....Joseph Sold into Egypt (Gen. 37: 25-36)
February 11. W.....Joseph Imprisoned (Gen. 39: 7-20)
February 12. T.....Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dreams (Gen. 41: 14-36)
February 13. F.....Joseph Raised to Power (Gen. 41: 37-57)
February 14. S.....Joseph Revealed to His Brothers (Gen. 45: 1-15)
February 15. S.....Joseph Meets His Father (Gen. 46: 28-34)

Lesson Subject Explained

Though Joseph was not the first-born, he being the eleventh son, of Jacob, yet it is said that his sons received the birthright. "And the sons of Reuben the first-born of Israel (for he was the first-born; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's couch, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel; and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the prince; but the birthright was Joseph's)." (1 Chron. 5: 1, 2.) Judah is here said to have prevailed over his brethren in that the genealogy was reckoned through him. The statement "of him came the prince" refers to Christ. It is not necessary that the genealogy be reckoned after the birthright, otherwise Joseph would have been in the genealogical line from Abraham to Christ.

Not only was Joseph given the rights of the first-born, but he was made the saviour of the family. When he revealed himself to his brothers he told them they had not sent him into Egypt, but "God sent me before you to preserve you a remnant in the earth, and to save you alive by great deliverance." (Gen. 45: 7.)

Next, the power of which he dreamed in youth he would exercise he actually exercised over the whole family. He sent for his father; he determined where they would dwell in Egypt; he told them what they should say when they met Pharaoh; and it is said, "Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to their families." (Gen. 47: 12.)

During his lifetime he was the teacher and leader of his people. In the last paragraph of our Lesson Text we have an intimation that Joseph knew what was in store for the people in the future. His interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams, and his advice to Pharaoh, and his wise direction of affairs of state in Egypt leave no doubt that God was with him to direct and guide. These powers he used for the betterment of his brethren as long as he lived.

Context of the Lesson

In the context of this lesson we find Jacob giving his blessing to his sons, suggesting something as to their future. Then we see him realizing that the end of his earthly pilgrimage is near, and so giving instructions to Joseph as to what was to be done with his body; it was to be buried in the cave of Machpelah where Abraham, Isaac, Sarah and Rebekah, and his own wife Leah, were buried. Joseph's place of power is seen here in that his father called on him to see that this was done. Jacob could depend on him more than on any of his other sons. Then we have the record of the death of Jacob and his burial. Joseph went to Pharaoh to ask that he be allowed to bury his father in Canaan. Pharaoh not only consented for Joseph to go, but he sent "all the servants of Pharaoh." And all the elders of the land of Egypt went along. Then all of Jacob's family. It was perhaps the greatest funeral procession ever made in honor of a plain simple man. When they had come near the Jordan they stopped for the seven days of mourning which was customary with the Jews. It is said the Canaanites were impressed with the ceremonies. Following the interment both Jews and Egyptians returned to Egypt.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The time of this lesson is 1689 B.C. Jacob was born in 1836 B.C. So he lived to be one hundred and forty-seven years of age. Jacob lived seventeen years in Egypt. Joseph had been in Egypt thirty-nine years, and was at this time fifty-six years of age.

PLACES.—Egypt and the cave of Machpelah before Mamre. In Genesis 23 we have the story of the purchase of this field and the cave therein for a burying place for the family of Abraham. It is both interesting and instructive as to the character of Abraham, and of the customs of that day.

PERSONS.—God, Joseph, and his brethren.

Golden Text Explained

Joseph is a fruitful bough. Some of the sons of Jacob had already conducted themselves in such way that he was sorely displeased with them. But not so with Joseph. There was nothing in his life which was distasteful to Jacob; nothing in Joseph's past caused Jacob to regret its memory. So he speaks of him as a fruitful bough. Not only is this a bough which bears fruit, but the fruit is pleasant to contemplate. It is bad enough to be a barren bough, producing no fruit at all; but it is even worse to bear fruit which brings sorrow and regret.

A fruitful bough by a fountain. In the arid section of Palestine trees did not grow well, except in the valleys or mountainous sections where there was plenty of rainfal . It was the tree by a fountain, a continual water supply, that was fruitful. In Jacob's sight Joseph was a bough on a tree planted near an ever-running fountain. Adam Clarke suggests that Jacob is talking of himself in this verse, for Jacob was the tree out of which Joseph came as the bough. But Jacob can be made the tree in the figure without saying he was talking about himself. Joseph is the bough, not the tree. And the idea of fruitfulness here need not be limited to the fact that he was the head of two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh, and that they outnumbered any of the other tribes at the crossing of the Jordan. His fruitfulness consisted not only in a large family, but in the fullness of life, ability under God to render a great service, and a willingness to put everything he had into that service to make it the very best possible.

His branches run over the wall. There are two things suggested here. First, this enlarges upon the thought of fruitfulness. The longer the branches, and more numerous, the more fruitful will be the bough which supports the branches. Second, branches over a wa l afforded shade. A house affords shade, but the walls cut off the breeze. A bough of great length, with many leafy branches, will both give shade and allow the cooling breezes to bring relief from the heat of the burning sun. And all of this Joseph proved to be to his family in the day of their extremity.

Helps on the Lesson Text

It may be that Joseph will hate us. These are the thoughts that filled the hearts, and the words on the lips of the brothers of Joseph after the days of mourning for their father were ended, when they had had time to collect their thoughts, and their conscience had time to accuse them on account of the evil they had done Joseph. This suggests that they had not really made a forthright confession of their cruelty to Joseph and asked his forgiveness. When Joseph made himself known to them he made it easy on them by saying that God had sent him to Egypt. This shows a fine spirit in Joseph, but it also betrays a lack of proper conception of guilt and a forthright confession of the same on their part. And it seems they had been content for twenty-two years to let the matter stand just there. Now that Jacob is dead, will Joseph take vengeance? Has he through respect for his aged father let them go lest he cause his father more grief? Did he, like Esau, swear to kill those who have wronged him? (Gen. 27: 41.)

Thy father did command before he died. The brothers sent a message to Joseph, telling him what his father had said. The Pulpit *Commentary* suggests that they sent Benjamin. That is a guess, of course, but it seems a reasonable one, since Benjamin had no part in their crime, and since he is the only full brother of Joseph.

Forgive, I pray thee now, the transgression of thy brethren. This is what the brothers said Jacob told them to tell Joseph. They do not remind Joseph of something Jacob told him. Why would Jacob tell them to deliver his command to Joseph after his death? This hardly measures up to Jacob's manner of dealing in his last days. But it may be said to the credit of Joseph that he did not question their statement. It is possible that he did not question it because it was actually true; but more likely because of his generosity and magnanimity.

And now, we pray thee, forgive the transgression. At last they have come to the point of actually asking Joseph's forgiveness, after the passing of thirty-nine years. No confession is made, but that is perhaps because the matter is so well known between the only parties involved. The sin is not named, and that is because that too is so well understood. Notice also that they asked that the "transgression of the servants of the God of thy father." They represented themselves as being now the servants of God. They made no claim to be his servants at the time of their crime, but they are now the servants of the God of Jacob. They felt this would have weight with Joseph. We cannot doubt their sincerity at this time. They were genuinely sorry for their sin, but they had been fearfully tardy in this matter.

Joseph wept when they spake unto him. Joseph had long ago ceased to hold anything against his brothers; not since the day he recognized the hand of God in the matter of sending him on before the family to save them. But he is deeply moved now that his brothers show themselves to be capable of such an act of humility and godliness. And at his show of affection they fell down before him and pledged themselves to be his servants. Had Joseph been so inclined he could well have said, I told you so! Remember my dreams which you thought were foolish, and for which you sold me into slavery? (Gen. 37: 5-11.)

Fear not: for am I in the place of God? If these words are to be taken as a question, as in our text, the meaning is, Am I in the place of God to take vengeance on you for your sins? The answer, of course, is, No! Vengeance belongs to God. No man has a right to take vengeance on others for their sins. Though Joseph was a ruler, yet the deed was done thirty-nine years before, and several years prior to the time he became ruler in Egypt.

But if the words are not a question, and are to be taken as an affirmation, they mean, Fear not, for I am in the place of God to you. I have been sent on before you, and have been given power and wealth sufficient to care for you and your families. Through the seventeen years of our father's life here I have cared for you in Goshen far better than you could have fared in Canaan; fear not, this care will continue.

And Joseph lived a hundred and ten years. Ninety-three years of this time he spent in Egypt, going back to Canaan only one time so far as we know, and that was to bury his father. He was governor

of Egypt eighty years of that time. He survived his father by fifty-four years.

God will surely visit you, and bring you up out of this land. No doubt Joseph had heard Jacob say the same thing. At least we know that Jacob had told him that God would take him back to "the land of your fathers." (Gen. 48: 21.) However we may believe that God made such revelations to Joseph, and that he in turn would deliver them to the rest of the family. Again we find him speaking of the promised land as that which God sware to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel. A promise seems not to be enough to satisfy Joseph; he made them swear that they would carry his bones out with them, when God visited them to take them out of the land into Canaan. Joseph must have known that such deliverance would not be too long delayed. He had only one hundred and forty-four years to wait from the time he died to be carried out of Egypt. However none of his brethren lived to carry out their promise; they had to leave that to the hands of others. "And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation." (Ex. 1: 6.)

They embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin. The Egyptians are famous for their science of embalming, the climate being in their favor. But Joseph was doubly honored by being placed in a coffin. Not all could afford coffins. Our Lord was buried without being placed in a coffin. The Jews rarely ever used them. It is thought that Egyptians buried only heads of families and notable people in coffins. But Joseph was given the best Egypt could afford, which was the best the world knew at that time.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

This lesson affords the opportunity to teach these departments the beauty of forgiveness, and of refusing to hold malice. Though the brothers had never formally asked Joseph to forgive, he had not held their sin against them. It also gives you the opportunity to teach them to listen to their conscience. It is possible to follow one's conscience and still be wrong; but one can not violate his conscience and be right. In the context we have the story of Joseph burying his father. This affords the opportunity to teach respect for parents.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

All the lessons suggested above may be adapted to these departments, and should be stressed. Doing good to those who wrongfully treat you is suggested in this lesson. If Joseph had been so inclined he could have retaliated and made his brothers suffer for their wrongdoings. "The discretion of a man maketh him slow to anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression." (Prov. 19: 11.) That describes Joseph as well as any verse in the Bible.

Young People and Adult Departments

People of all ages need to be reminded to forgive; to confess their wrongs and ask forgiveness; to refuse to hold malice; to do good even to our enemies. These are practical lessons always timely.

Joseph was more than an Israelite; he was a world character, citizen. He was an Israelite by birth, but in some degree like our Lord, he went beyond national bounds, and may be looked upon as a world citizen. He deserves respect of all men. The Egyptians of his day recognized his worth and used him as long as he lived, and gave him their highest honors in death. We ought to know him, honor him, and emulate him in all his good qualities. There are few better ways of making character than holding up such characters as Joseph to your class. Select the good points and drive them home to your class.

Topics for Discussion

1. Why did the brothers of Joseph wait so long to make their confession and ask for forgiveness? People generally are not as courteous to their families as they are to others outside the family. We are too prone to take things for granted with the family. In the heat of anger men will say things to their wives they soon wish they had not said. And they would make an open confession and ask for pardon if it had been some one outside the family, but the wife (or husband) is supposed to understand we are sorry.

2. Though Joseph no longer held their sin against them, they continued to suffer many years after the sin. Suffering for sin does not stop even at forgiveness. The evil consequences of sin go on even to other generations, though the guilt cannot be transferred. So to avoid suffering, refrain from sin.

3. Joseph's brothers meant harm by selling him, but God meant good, and brought good out of it. The people who crucified Jesus meant harm, but God brought good out of that for the whole world. The intentions of Joseph's brothers determined their guilt in spite of God's ability to bring good out of their sinful actions; so the evil intentions of the Jews in crucifying Jesus determined their guilt, for which their nation continues to suffer even now, and the fact that God was able to bring good out of that tragedy does not lessen their guilt.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you learn from the Devotional Reading?
What lessons are suggested in the daily Bible readings?
What blessing did Joseph get which did not naturally fall to him?
What three things can be said of Joseph in reference to his relation to his family?
What did you learn from the context of this lesson?
What dates in this lesson are of interest to you?
What is meant by Joseph being a fruitful bough?
What is suggested by the bough being near a fountain?
What two things suggested by the branches running over a wall?
In what way did Joseph's brothers misjudge him after Jacob's death?
Did the brothers send the message, or go in person?
Do you think Jacob gave this command to Joseph through them?
Did Joseph quibble about whether his father was the author of this move?
How long had they waited to ask forgiveness?
What moved them to ask forgiveness, fear, or love for the right?
What did they call themselves at this time, and why?

How was Joseph affected by this action of his brothers?
What two meanings can be got from his answer to his brothers?
How old was Joseph when he died?
How long had he been in Egypt? How long had he been governor?
How long did he live after his father's death?
How many times did he visit Canaan while living in Egypt?

Lesson VIII—February 22, 1948

JUDAH'S PLACE IN THE NATION

The Lesson Text

Gen. 43: 8-10; 49: 8-12

8 And Jū'dăh said unto Ĭs'rā-ĕl his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones.
9 I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever:
10 For except we had lingered, surely we had now returned a second time.

8 Jū'dăh, thee shall thy brethren praise:
Thy hand shall be on the neck of thine enemies;
Thy father's sons shall bow down before thee.
9 Jū'dăh is a lion's whelp;
From the prey, my son, thou art gone up:
He stooped down, he couched as a lion,
And as a lioness; who shall rouse him up?
10 The sceptre shall not depart from Jū'dăh,
Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,
Until Shī'lōh come;
And unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be.
11 Binding his foal unto the vine,
And his ass's colt unto the choice vine;
He hath washed his garments in wine,
And his vesture in the blood of grapes:
12 His eyes shall be red with wine,
And his teeth white with milk.

1 Chron. 28: 4

4 Howbeit Jĕ-hō'văh, the God of Ĭs'rā-ĕl, chose me out of all the house of my father to be king over Ĭs'rā-ĕl for ever: for he hath chosen Jū'dăh to be prince; and in the house of Jū'dăh, the house of my father; and among the sons of my father he took pleasure in me to make me king over all Ĭs'rā-ĕl.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah."* (Heb. 7: 14a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Gen. 44: 18-26.

Daily Bible Readings

February 16. M.....The Birth of Judah (Gen. 29: 31-35)
February 17. T.....Judah Proposes to Sell Joseph (Gen. 37: 25-28)
February 18. W.....Judah's Intercession for Benjamin (Gen. 44: 18-34)
February 19. T.....Judah Leads the Way into Egypt (Gen. 46: 28-34)
February 20. F.....Judah Prevailed Above His Brothers (1 Chron. 5: 1, 2)
February 21. S.....Descendants of Judah (1 Chron. 4: 1-23)
February 22. S.....Judah's Tribe Blessed (Deut. 33: 7-11)

Lesson Subject Explained

Judah's place among the brothers of Jacob, and the place of the tribe which wore his name, was one of preeminence. Though Joseph was given the birthright, and so a double portion in that his two sons

were made heads of tribes, yet this was not as great an honor as that enjoyed by Judah. From the history of Jacob and Esau (Gen. 25: 29-34; 27: 1-33) we learn that there is a difference between the birthright and the blessing. However it is rather difficult to arrive at a definite understanding of just what each included. The birthright went to the eldest son, unless he was deprived of it for some reason, and seemed to entitle him to a double portion of the father's substance and give him right to be head of the family. The blessing, as one author puts it, was "a solemn, extraordinary, prophetical benediction, entailing the covenant blessing of Abraham, with all the promises, temporal and spiritual, belonging to it, and by which his posterity were to be distinguished as God's peculiar people." (Bush.) The blessing to Jacob included rule over his brethren (Gen. 27: 29), and so did Judah's blessing. And so far as we know the one who received the blessing enjoyed the distinction of being in the seed line between Abraham and Jesus Christ.

Concerning this blessing McClintock and Strong have this to say, "From the time that God entered into covenant with Abraham, and promised extraordinary blessings to his posterity, it appears to have been customary for the father of each family, in the direct line, the line of promise, immediately previous to his death, to call his children around him, and to inform them, according to the knowledge which it had pleased God to give him, how and in what manner the divine blessing conferred upon Abraham was to descend upon them. Upon these occasions the patriarchs enjoyed a divine illumination, and under its influence their benediction was deemed a prophetic oracle, foretelling events with the utmost certainty, and extending to the remotest period of time." (Vol. 1, p. 832.) But whatever distinction this blessing carried with it, Judah had it, though he was the fourth son.

Context of the Lesson

In the context of this lesson we find Jacob and his sons trying to provide for their families during a famine. They had been to Egypt for corn; they had been accused by the governor of being spies, and Simeon had been kept as hostage until they would bring Benjamin back with them. On their return they had found their money put in their sacks and this added to their confusion. But when the corn was gone, Jacob asked them to go again to Egypt, but they refused to do so unless he would consent for Benjamin to go. This he refused to do until the famine drove him to it. Finally Judah promised to be surety for Benjamin, and Jacob consented. It is interesting to note that before this Reuben had made an effort to get his father to let Benjamin go, saying, "Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again." (Gen. 41: 37.) But Jacob was not moved by this as he was by Judah's offer. This indicates the fact that Jacob valued Judah's word higher than that of Reuben.

In the context of the next section of our Lesson Text we find Jacob in Egypt, and sick, on what proved to be his deathbed. He had given the birthright to Joseph, and had blessed Joseph's sons contrary to the wishes of Joseph. He then called in all his sons, and, through divine guidance, spoke of their futures. Judah and Joseph were

given the honors, nine verses out of twenty-five being devoted to their blessings.

In the context of the third division of our lesson we find David with plans to build a temple for the ark of the covenant, a place where Jehovah might be worshiped. But God had disallowed, David was not to build the temple. So he called the princes of Israel, the captains and leaders of the nation together to tell them why he could not build the temple as he had planned, and that his son Solomon would carry on after him.

The Historical Background

TIME.—For the first section, 1707 B.C.; for the second section, 1689 B.C.; and for the third section, 1015 B.C.

PLACES.—Canaan, Egypt, and Jerusalem. The first section tells of experiences Jacob and his sons had before they left Canaan to go to Egypt to live. The second section tells of experiences in Egypt, after they had been there seventeen years. And the last section tells of things which happened in the life of David in Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—God, Jacob and his twelve sons, and David.

Golden Text Explained

For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah. In the book of Hebrews it was the purpose of the writer to show that Jesus was superior to angels, to Moses, and to Aaron. It was his purpose to prove that the priesthood of Jesus was greater than the priesthood of Aaron, who was the son of Levi, the brother of Judah. And, further, it was the writer's purpose to prove a change of the law on account of the change in the priesthood. To prove that the priesthood of Jesus was greater than that of Aaron, the writer showed that Melchizedek was greater than Abraham because Melchizedek blessed Abraham, and "without any dispute the less is blessed of the better." Aaron was not better than his father Abraham, so if Melchizedek was better, or greater, than Abraham, he was greater than Aaron. But Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek. And Aaron, through Abraham, paid tithes to him, while yet in the loins of his father Abraham. And this added proof that Melchizedek is greater than Aaron.

But Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, and not after the order of Aaron. If Jesus were on earth he could not be a priest, because the sons of Aaron, and Levi, filled that office on earth. Therefore the priesthood of Jesus is greater than that of Aaron and his successors. The priesthood, the office of the priest, therefore has been changed. In what does the change of the priesthood consist? First, it has been changed from one tribe to another. The priesthood of Aaron was in the tribe of Levi. Jesus was of the tribe of Judah. Next, the priesthood was changed as to location. The priesthood of Aaron was on this earth. The priesthood of Christ is in heaven. Aaron's sons could not be priests in heaven; Jesus cannot be a priest on earth. Third, the offerings of the Aaronic priests were carnal, animals, etc., but the offerings of the Melchizedek priesthood, in the person of Jesus, are spiritual.

Helps on the Lesson Text

Send the lad with me. Judah called Benjamin a lad and yet within one year they go into Egypt. In Gen. 46: 21 we learn that Benjamin was married and had ten sons. According to the dates usually given he was around thirty years of age at the time.

That we may live, and not die. Judah put the matter squarely up to his father. It was either necessary to risk Benjamin in the hands of the governor of Egypt or the whole family of Israel perish. Would Jacob risk the life of the whole family just to keep one beloved son out of danger?

I will be surety for him. This is the language of Judah to his father. A surety in law is "one bound with and for another; one legally liable for a debt, default or miscarriage of another." Surety is also defined, "Surety for payment or for the performance of some act." Judah took upon himself personally the responsibility to see that "the lad" returned. Though he did not offer to let his father slay two of his sons as Reuben did (Gen. 41: 37), yet his father's confidence in him moved him to entrust Benjamin to his care.

Let me bear the blame for ever. This seems to be a far more sensible offer than that made by Reuben. What satisfaction would Jacob get out of killing two of his grandchildren who were in no way responsible? The statement here if literally translated, we are told, would read, *I will be a sinner to thee.* Judah would be willing to be counted a sinner, unworthy of respect, if he does not bring back the lad.

Thee shall thy brethren praise. This was a play on words. The name Judah means praise. So preeminent would he become that even his brethren would praise him. This may not have been literally true with him personally, but eminently true with reference to his tribe in the person of his illustrious son Jesus Christ.

Thy father's sons shall bow down before thee. This may be considered to have its fulfillment in Judah receiving the blessing, prevailing above his brethren. (1 Chron. 5: 2.)

Judah is a lion's whelp. The word *whelp* means puppy, or cub. The word lion is connected with the name of Judah in several places. The ancient scholars among the Jews said Judah had a lion for his standard. (Num. 2: 3.) The city where he encamped once was called Ariel, which means *the lion of God.* And Jesus is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah. (Rev. 5: 5.)

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah. The word translated sceptre means nothing more than a rod, or staff, but since rulers carried a staff it came to signify a ruler. So Jacob said the ruler of the people would always be of the tribe of Judah until Shiloh should come.

Until Shiloh come. The Hebrew word here translated Shiloh, we are told, means *"to be quiet, easy, secure,* in which case Shiloh signifies the *Tranquilizer, the Pacificator, the Giver of Peace."* (Bush.) Without doubt it refers to Christ, and this part of Jacob's prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus Christ came into the world.

Binding his foal unto the vine, etc. Whether we are to take verses 11 and 12 in a material or spiritual sense no one seems to know. And whether these verses apply to Judah only, or to him materially and to Shiloh spiritually is difficult to say. This is the judgment of your

writer. As Judah's inheritance in Canaan would abound in good things to eat and drink, wine and milk, so Shiloh would afford the best for those who serve him. "In him there is plenty of all that nourishes and refreshes the soul, and maintains and cheers the divine life in it; in him we may have wine and milk, the riches of Judah's tribe, without money and without price." (M. Henry.)

Jehovah . . . chose me out of all the house of my father. For the interesting record of the choice and anointing of David to be king the reader should read 1 Sam. 16: 1-13. When Saul had proved to be unfaithful and unworthy David was chosen to replace him, and the rulers of the people from that time on in Judah were of David's family.

For he hath chosen Judah to be prince. God chose Judah from among the sons of Jacob to be the tribe from which the rulers were to be chosen. As Judah was not the oldest son of Jacob, neither was Jesse, the father of David, the oldest son in his father's family; neither was David the oldest, but youngest, son of Jesse. So God has not followed any given pattern for the selection of the men who were to rule his people. And had Samuel been left to his own wisdom he would have selected one of the older sons of Jesse to be the king. But God told him not to look upon the outward appearances. The outward appearances are not indications of character. God looks upon the heart to make his selections. And in spite of determining by the heart, God's selection was not always pleasing to God.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

This lesson abounds with good stories to interest these children. You can picture Simeon in prison in Egypt as Joseph's sure way to get to see his baby brother. He was forcing them to bring him down. And the love of the aged father in fearing to allow him to go lest he not be permitted to return. Judah's anxiety for the good of all the family and his willingness to be surety for the safety of Benjamin will be of interest to them. And David's selection to be king will interest them. Picture the older brothers and their expectations and disappointments. Then tell of David being called from the place where he was keeping the sheep, and how he, the youngest of all, and a mere boy, was selected and anointed to be the next king.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Living so as to merit the confidence of parents is a good lesson for these departments. Reuben had lost the confidence of his father, so Jacob paid no attention to his offer to be responsible for Benjamin. But Judah had his father's confidence. Young people can bring a lot of grief upon themselves, as well as on their parents, by conducting themselves in such way as to lose the confidence of parents.

Young People and Adult Departments

The folly of being partial to children may be learned from Jacob, as well as Isaac. His partial treatment had something to do with Joseph's brothers selling him into Egypt. Jacob gave in to the better judgment of his sons. It is altogether possible that children see some things clearer than their parents. And when parents

are convinced of that fact they ought to admit it, and give their children credit for it.

Topics for Discussion

1. If the expression, the *sceptre shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh come,* means Judah shall be the ruling tribe from that time to the coming of Christ, how do you account for Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin, being the first king? (1 Sam. 9: 1, 2.) Some say the expression means that the sceptre, or right to rule, shall not fall from Judah's hand until the coming of Christ, no emphasis to be placed on when he should begin to rule.

2. Consider the rewards of excellence. Judah lived in such way as to gain the confidence of his father and the approval of God. As a reward of this he was chosen to be a prince, and from him the redeemer was to come. It has always paid to be good.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What is suggested in the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
What do you know about the meaning of the birthright?
Who of the sons of Jacob received the birthright?
What do you know of the blessing, and who received it?
Discuss the contexts of each section of this lesson.
What dates connected with this lesson are of interest?
What places, and what events happened at each place?
Of what tribe was our Lord?
In what tribe was the old priesthood?
In what sense was the priesthood changed?
What other change was made necessary by the change of the priesthood?
How old was Benjamin at the time of our lesson?
How serious was their need of food at the time of our lesson?
What did Judah offer to do to get his father to let Benjamin go?
What of the obedience of children at this age?
What did Jacob say of Judah in his final blessing?
What is the meaning of Shiloh?
Were temporal blessings included in Judah's portion?
What connection does David's selection as king have with our lesson?

Lesson IX—February 29, 1948

ISRAEL IN EGYPTIAN BONDAGE

The Lesson Text

Ex. 5: 10-21

10 And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Phā'raōh, I will not give you straw.
11 Go yourselves, get you straw where ye can find it; for nought of your work shall be diminished.
12 So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Ē'ġŷpt to gather stubble for straw.
13 And the taskmasters were urgent, saying, Fulfil your works, *your* daily tasks, as when there was straw.

14 And the officers of the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl, whom Phā'raōh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, and demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task both yesterday and to-day, in making brick as heretofore?
15 Then the officers of the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl came and cried unto Phā'raōh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants?
16 There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick: and, behold, thy servants are beaten; but the fault is in thine own people.
17 But he said, Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and sacrifice to Jē-hō'văh.
18 Go therefore now, and work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the number of bricks.
19 And the officers of the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl did see that they were in evil case, when it was said, Ye shall not diminish aught from your bricks, *your* daily tasks.
20 And they met Mō'sĕs and Aâr'ŏn, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Phā'raōh:
21 And they said unto them, Jē-hō'văh look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savor to be abhorred in the eyes of Phā'raōh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"And Jehovah said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt."* (Ex. 3: 7a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ex. 2: 23-25.

Daily Bible Readings

February 23. M.....The Pharaoh that Knew Not Joseph (Ex. 1: 8-14)
February 24. T.....Moses Born in Slavery (Ex. 2: 1-10)
February 25. W.....Israel Delivered from Slavery (Ex. 14: 21-31)
February 26. T.....The Song of Deliverance (Ex. 15: 1-18)
February 27. F.....God's Care for Israel (Ps. 105: 1-25)
February 28. S.....God's Care Continued (Ps. 105: 26-45)
February 29. S.....Stephen on Deliverance (Acts 7: 15-36)

Lesson Subject Explained

Joseph died one hundred and forty-four years before the law of Moses was given on Sinai. The bondage of the people did not begin until after the death of the Pharaoh who knew Joseph. So during that period of one hundred and forty-four years the people were enslaved and delivered. How soon after the death of Joseph their slavery began we have no way of knowing. But we do know that the Pharaoh who knew not Joseph and oppressed the people was the one ruling at the time of the birth of Moses. Stephen said, "The people grew and multiplied in Egypt, till there arose another king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph. The same dealt craftily with our race, and ill-treated our fathers, that they should cast out their babes to the end they might not live. At which season Moses was born." (Acts 7: 17-20.) So this king either ruled over a long period of time, or the period of actual oppression of Israel was short.

The identity of the Pharaoh who oppressed Israel is admittedly difficult, and it seems impossible from the information now at hand. There is no agreement among scholars of the first rank, and indeed few of them do more than record the opinions of men who have studied the question. Geikie takes as firm position as any, and it seems puts up as good arguments. He says Rameses II was the king. In the first place he is the only one who had long enough reign, holding the throne for sixty-seven years. Next, the last forty-six years of his reign was one of peace with other nations, a sufficiently long period to carry on the program of construction said to have been characteristic of the reign of the king who oppressed the Israelites. "The monuments of this great king still

cover the soil of Egypt and Nubia in almost countless numbers, and show him to have been the greatest builder of all the Pharaohs. There is not, says Mariette, "a ruin in Egypt or Nubia that does not bear his name. . . . He founded towns, dug canals, and filled the land with Colossi, sphinxes, statues, and other creations." The fact that he was such a builder suggests that he may have been the oppressor, needing slave labor to carry on all his works.

Context of the Lesson

In the context of this lesson we find that the children of Israel had been in bondage for some time. Their burdens have become so hard to bear that they have called on the Lord for relief. God heard their cries and made preparations to send them a deliverer. In fact God had foreseen their need of man, and had already been schooling one for that very purpose. Eighty years before the time of our lesson Moses was born, saved from death by his parents, found by Pharaoh's daughter, adopted by her as her son, and educated in all the sciences and wisdom of the Egyptians. He had made an attempt to help his people, but had been misunderstood, so he fled to Midian. There he fell in love and married; and for a living he was a keeper of sheep. Unknown to him, he was being educated for the greatest task ever undertaken by one man—the deliverance of a nation of people who were the slaves of the greatest and most powerful nation on earth.

While herding his sheep in the vicinity of Sinai he noticed a bush burning, but not consumed. When he turned aside to see about it, a voice told him to take off his shoes, for the ground on which he stood was holy. In the conversation which followed he was commissioned to undertake the deliverance of his people from bondage. He found his brother Aaron, who was to be his helper, and they went to Pharaoh, telling him that their God wished his people to be allowed to go into the wilderness to hold a feast. But Pharaoh professed to have no knowledge of such a God, and commanded Moses and Aaron to leave the people alone, and not hinder them from their work. So Pharaoh told his taskmasters to demand the same number bricks made, but not to furnish straw; make the people gather their own straw and still make the same number of bricks as usual. He attributed their desire to go for a feast in the wilderness to the fact that they were idle, did not have enough work to do, so he gave them more.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date of this lesson is 1491 B.C. It was four hundred and thirty years since the promise was made to Abraham to give his seed a land in which to live.

PLACE.—Egypt.

PERSONS.—God, Pharaoh, Moses, Aaron, and the children of Israel. The Pharaohs loved to be worshiped by their subjects. A letter written during the reign of Rameses II by one of his subjects follows: "On the day of Pharaoh's coming joy reigns and spreads without bounds. Rameses Miamum, life, health, strength to him; he is the god Mout of the two Egypts in his speech: the sun of kings as ruler: the glory of Egypt, the friend of Tum, as general. All the

earth comes to him. The great king of Kheta—Hittites—sends his messengers to his fellow-prince of Kadesh, saying, 'If thou be ready, let us set out for Egypt, for the words of the god Rameses II are fulfilling themselves. Let us pay our court to him at Tanis for he gives breath to him who loves him, and by him all people live.' " (Geikie.)

Golden Text Explained

I have surely seen the affliction of my people. Our Golden Text is one of three statements God made with reference to his response to the cry of his people. 1. He says he had seen their affliction. 2. He says he had heard their cry for deliverance from their unmerciful taskmasters. 3. He says he had come down to deliver them. When God does something outside the reach of common providence, it is usually said that he comes down to accomplish such. Taking these three thoughts together they make a good lesson on God's condescension to hear us, to take cognizance of our needy condition, and to do for us what we are not able to do for ourselves.

As to the affliction which the people suffered we may get some light from a description of the usual tactics of such taskmasters. "The monuments often, indeed, speak of brickmaking by forced labor, and in the various paintings which represent this, or any other kind of taskwork, the overseer with his stick is rarely absent. Thus, among the pictures at Beni Hassan, workmen are represented as being beaten severely with short sticks, which differed from the long rods of office, and were used solely to bastinado the unfortunate laborers. Some of these are seen thrown naked on the ground, two men holding the arms and another the feet, while the taskmaster showers blows on the exposed body. There is even a picture at Beni Hassan of a woman being bastinadoed." (Geikie.) We are told that Egypt was notorious among the ancient nations for cruelty. The ruling class even enslaved other Egyptians to carry on public work programs.

Helps on the Lesson Text

And the taskmasters of the people went out. These were the men who were responsible to Pharaoh for seeing that a certain amount of work was done by the people. He had called them in for a session, and had told them what to tell the people.

Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw. Straw was used by mixing it with the mud, or clay; the straw served to hold the brick together. We are told that in certain places ruins are still so well preserved that bricks can be seen with varying amounts of straw until it practically disappears. This has been taken as proof of the truth of this account of Moses, "It is, moreover, a striking fact, in connection with the narrative of Moses, that great part of the construction of Rameses II were of brick, as seen to this day in the mounds which hide their ruins. Huge bricks of Nile mud dried in the sun, some mixed with stubble and others made without straw—the remains of the town wall—still mark the site of Rameses." (Geikie.) It is also said that on each of these bricks is stamped the name of Rameses in these words, "Ra, Lord of Truth, the Chosen of the Sun-god."

Nought of your work shall be diminished. From verse 8 we can see the meaning of this statement. "And the number of the bricks,

which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish aught thereof." So not only were they to gather their own straw, which they had not been doing before, but they shall make the same number of bricks. Thus the work of gathering the straw was added to their usual tasks.

And the officers of the children of Israel . . . were beaten. These were Jews selected by the taskmasters as foremen among the people. It was their duty to drive their own people to their work. And when the required number of bricks was not made these foremen were beaten with the bastinado. Adam Clarke says this form of punishment sometimes consisted of forcing the victim to lie on the stomach holding the feet upright, and the beating is applied to the soles of the feet, rendering him unable to walk for weeks, and sometimes making a cripple for life.

Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants? This is the complaint of the officers, foremen, among the Jews. These foremen continued their complaint, saying, The fault is in thine own people. An impossible task had been required of them. These men felt that Pharaoh did not know about it, and if they but told him, the matter would be corrected. And Pharaoh then accused them of being idle or they would not wish to go into the wilderness for a feast.

The officers . . . did see that they were in evil case. They now understand that Pharaoh is the author of the unreasonable demands, and that he intends to do all in his power to enforce those unreasonable demands. They see nothing before them but suffering. If they work hard and long enough each day to make the required number of bricks, they will soon work themselves to death. If they do not make the required number of bricks each day they will be beaten severely. This was their *evil case.* This also suggests that they had little hope in their deliverance by Moses at this time. They could see nothing before them but hard work and suffering.

They met Moses and Aaron . . . as they came forth from Pharaoh. This was not a good time for them to meet Moses; they were in no proper frame of mind to discuss the matter with Moses immediately upon leaving the conference with Pharaoh.

Jehovah look upon you, and judge. While this is a strong statement, yet there is a reserve about it that is commendable. They might well have expressed that judgment themselves had they not been so reserved. They exercised good control of their tempers and tongues. They were willing to leave Moses and Aaron to the judgment of God. We are told to be slow to anger and slow to speak, for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. (Jas. 1: 19, 20.)

Ye have made our savor to be abhorred. The word *savor* means, "That property of a thing which affects the organs of taste or smell." And then the word is often used simply to mean "taste or smell." (Webster.) So the literal statement is, You have made our smell to be abhorred by Pharaoh. In other words you have caused us to stink in his presence. We have the same thought in these words, "Ye have troubled me, to make me odious to the inhabitants of the land." (Gen. 34: 30.) They let Moses and Aaron know that they were doing the Jews more harm than good.

To put a sword in their hand to slay us. We often say of the actions of a well-meaning, but unwise, friend that he gives our

enemies a club to use on us. This is the thought here. Instead of helping the Jews, Moses and Aaron had given Pharaoh a club, sword, a weapon to use on them to make life harder. Of course they were mistaken, but they are not to be censured, because they had not sufficient information or proof yet that Moses and Aaron were the servants of God to bring about their deliverance.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

The Golden Text of this lesson will afford better material for these departments than most of the Lesson Text. The condition of the people in their suffering will easily gain the sympathy of the children. When this is done, the goodness of God can be emphasized in that he saw their suffering, he heard their cries for help, and that he came down to do something for them. God does not always immediately stop such suffering. He could have performed a miracle and stopped their suffering immediately, but we must not critize God for not doing things in just the way we might wish to see them done. His ways are higher than our ways. (Isa. 55: 8, 9.) And another lesson might be brought out of this. Moses and Aaron were doing something for their good, but they were not able to see where they could get any good from the work of Moses. So our parents do things they say will be for our good, but children often are unable to see how these things can turn out for their good.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Since Christians are taught to pray for the rulers of the land, it will not be out of place here to emphasize the fact that we ought to give thanks to God for the privilege of living in a land where we may not be treated as Pharaoh treated one great portion of his subjects. Young people in these departments need to be taught respect for the authority of the government, national, state, and city, under which they live. They should be taught to appreciate religious liberty, the freedom of speech, and freedom from domination in the common affairs of life.

Pharaoh's cause was unjust, and betrayed itself to be such by (1) refusing to listen to reason; (2) by using clumsy false accusation against the people. He said, You are idle, you need more work or you would not wish to go to worship; and (3) by resorting to strong arm methods when others failed. This is characteristic of all unjust causes. Measure yourself by this rule to see if you are sometimes guilty.

Young People and Adult Departments

The above paragraph should be emphasized here. Do parents at times demand unreasonable things of their children? And when failing to reason the matter with them, do they falsely accuse? And then do they resort to parental authority to put over an unjust demand? This is not to question the right of parents to control children. There is need for a lot more of that than is in evidence today. But parental control should be just and righteous. And a course which does not appear reasonable, and cannot be shown to the child to be reasonable, will generally do harm if imposed by parental authority, provided, of course, the children are old enough to understand.

Calm tempers and slow tongues are treasures in times of stress. Instead of pronouncing curses upon Moses and Aaron these foremen among the Jews left this to the Lord. This gives an opportunity for the teacher to give some very good practical lessons on control of the temper and tongue.

Topics for Discussion

1. It is comforting to know that God can foresee our troubles and make provisions for meeting them. God started making provisions to meet the needs of these people when Moses was born—if not before. He had to have a man ready to deliver the people at the time when they came to a sufficient realization of their need of deliverance. So God can now foresee our needs, and set in force movements calculated to fill our needs by the time we realize our need.

2. Suffering is to be endured patiently, even if it is undeserved. (1) It does the sufferer good in that it develops patience and moral strength. (2) It manifests Christ in our life, and his power over us. (3) It glorifies God among men.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson, and its teaching?
What lesson is suggested by the Devotional Reading?
What did you get from the daily Bible readings?
Within what period of time were the Jews enslaved?
What do you know of the identity of the Pharaoh who oppressed the people?
Discuss fully the context of the lesson.
What is the time of this lesson?
What is said in this lesson about the worship of Pharaoh?
What three things did God say to show his interest in his people?
What do you know of the manner in which the people were punished?
Who were the taskmasters, and the foremen?
What use was made of straw in making bricks?
Is there any evidence in existence today of the truth of this account by Moses?
How did Pharaoh increase the labor of the Jews?
What satisfaction did the foremen get by taking their cause directly to Pharaoh?
What is meant by the statement that they were in evil case?
What did the foremen say to Moses and Aaron?
What did they mean by Moses making their savor to be abhorred?
How did Moses put a sword in Pharaoh's hand?
How can we do good through undeserved suffering?
Is suffering calculated to draw people to God, or drive them away?

Lesson X—March 7, 1948

THE GROWTH OF ISRAEL IN EGYPT

The Lesson Text

Ex. 1: 8-20.

8 Now there arose a new king over Ĕ'gĭpt, who knew not Joseph.
9 And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl are more and mightier than we:

10 Come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they also join themselves unto our enemies, and fight against us, and get them up out of the land.
11 Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Phā'raōh store-cities, Pī'thŏm and Rā-ăm'sēs.
12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And they were grieved because of the children of Īs'rā-ĕl.
13 And the Ē-ĝŷp'tiăns made the children of Īs'rā-ēl to serve with rigor:
14 And they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field, all their service, wherein they made them serve with rigor.
15 And the king of Ē'ĝŷpt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of the one was Shĭph'răh, and the name of the other Pū'ăh:
16 And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the birth-stool; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him; but if it be a daughter, then she shall live.
17 But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Ē'ĝŷpt commanded them, but saved the men-children alive.
18 And the king of Ē'ĝŷpt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men-children alive?
19 And the midwives said unto Phā'raōh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Ē-ĝŷp'tiăn women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwife come unto them.
20 And God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"The people grew and multiplied in Egypt."* (Acts 7: 17b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Deut. 10: 19-22.

Daily Bible Readings

March 1. M.....Those Who Went to Egypt (Gen. 46: 1-17)
March 2. T.....Those Who Went, Cont'd (Gen. 46: 18-34)
March 3. W.....Those Who Came out of Egypt (Num. 1: 16-33)
March 4. T.....Those Who Came out, Cont'd (Num. 1: 34-54)
March 5. F.....Stephen's Account (Acts 7: 11-36)
March 6. S.....God's Kindness to Israel (Ps. 106: 1-23)
March 7. S.....God's Kindness, Cont'd (Ps. 106: 23-48)

Lesson Subject Explained

The inspired Moses seems to have used all the words at his command to leave the impression that the growth of the Israelites was extraordinary, if not miraculous. In Ex. 1: 7 we read, "And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty: and the land was filled with them." In that verse there are four phrases which describe their unusual growth in numbers, and the fifth, though a result of the others, emphasizes their unnatural increase. The words, *increased abundantly*, carry the idea of swarming like fishes. One author says, "They added, they multiplied, they grew, they changed from a family to a clan, and from a clan to a nation."

One writer accounts for their growth in a very natural way. "From Jacob to Joshua was eleven generations, according to 1 Chron. 7: 23-27. The third generation, Ephraim, was born before Jacob came to Egypt in 1706. For the remaining eight generations, a very simple calculation shows that if each of the fifty-five males (leaving out Jacob and his sons from the sixty-eight male descendants at this time) should have less than an average of four male children, the total would amount to 600,000 males in the two hundred and fifteen years to the Exodus. But if we take into account that in addition there were considerable numbers in their households (verse 1) from whom there would also be descendants, it is not at all im-

probable that the numbers should reach that sum in these two centuries." (Peloubet.) We have before learned that it was four hundred and thirty years from the time the promise was made to Abraham to the Exodus; and that two hundred and fifteen of those years passed between the promise and the time Jacob and his family went to Egypt. So that left two hundred and fifteen years for this growth to take place. (See Lesson III.)

Context of the Lesson

The book of Genesis closes with a statement about the death of Joseph at the age of one hundred and ten years, and the book of Exodus opens with the information that a new king had come to the throne, one who knew not Joseph. Adam Clarke says Rameses II came to the throne in 1604 B.C. Joseph died in 1635 B.C. It had been about one hundred years from the time Jacob went to Egypt to the time Rameses became king. This had given the Israelites time to show signs of their rapid growth, and to cause a king to fear that they might join an enemy.

The Historical Background

TIME.—1604 B.C.

PLACE.—Egypt, the land of Goshen.

PERSONS.—God, Moses, Pharaoh, Egyptians, and Israelites. "There is now in the museum of Bulaq, near Cairo, Egypt, the actual body of Rameses II, the Pharaoh of the oppression. It was discovered in July, 1881, together with thirty-five other mummies of kings, queens, and princes, and high priests in the ruins of the temple of Deir-el-Bahari near Thebes, by Professors Maspero and Brugsch. By written papyri preserved with the mummy, and markings on the case and on the bandages, it was easily identified. The mummy was unbandaged in 1886, in the presence of the Khedive, and an august assemblage." (Peloubet.)

Golden Text Explained

The people grew and multiplied. Various reasons have been suggested by about as many writers for the unprecedented growth of the Israelites in Egypt. In the first place they had moved into a new land, Egypt, and they felt more or less like pioneers in a new country. There was room for expansion in Goshen, and the fertility of the land provided food and opportunity for more workers. The birth rate in our own nation was greater during the pioneering days. Next, Israel was of vigorous stock. Even now, after eighteen centuries of calamities and persecutions, the Jews are still with us. Few races of Abraham's day, and fewer families, have survived to the present. Next, the type of life the Jews lived in Goshen contributed to their rapid growth. They were shepherds, living out of doors. It was an active life. The people of our day who do the most manual labor have the largest families. And, too, they were comparatively free from immorality, and this contributes to healthful family relations, necessary to such rapid growth. And another reason for this rapid growth may be seen in the fact that marriage was essential to the dignity and social standing of an Israelite, so that very few of them remained unmarried. It is also a known fact

that many, if not all, of them married young. Benjamin had ten children when he was about thirty years old. And, people lived longer at that time than we do now. Abraham died at one hundred and seventy-five years of age; Isaac at one hundred and eighty; Jacob one hundred and forty-seven; and Joseph one hundred and ten. It would not be unreasonable to suppose that they continued to bear children longer than people do now. If there was any special providence of God exercised, it would be most reasonable to suppose that they were led to marry young and were given the ability to bear children to a greater age. Their active type of life gave them better health, and thus a greater per cent of them were able to bear children. In these and other ways, which did not seem at the time to be miraculous, God could very well have caused his people to multiply to the degree suggested in the text.

Helps on the Lesson Text

Now there arose a new king over Egypt. If we are correct in assuming that the Pharaoh of the oppression was Rameses II, this was not only a new king, but a new dynasty, the nineteenth.

Who knew not Joseph. It is hardly possible that this Pharaoh had never heard of Joseph. Since Joseph saved the country and enjoyed the respect of the nation for eighty years, he would not be so soon forgotten, and his name so completely obliterated that a man of sufficient prominence to be king would know nothing of him. Joseph had been dead less than forty years. Adam Clarke says the verb translated *know* in this verse means to acknowledge or approve, as well as to have knowledge of. Our English word certainly has that meaning, for Jesus will say unto some, "I never knew you." (Matt. 7: 23.) Is it possible that Jesus will not know such persons ever lived? No, the meaning is, I never approved you. So this new king did not acknowledge Joseph, did not respect his laws, or his ways of governing the people.

Children of Israel are . . . mightier than we. Whether the king meant that there were actually more of the children of Israel in number, or as the margin suggests, *too many and too mighty for us*, is difficult to say. Surely there were more than three millions of the Egyptians. But in the light of what follows we may conclude that the king thought Israel had multiplied to the extent that they were too many and too mighty; that they constituted a force, which, when added to any of their enemies, would overpower them.

Let us deal wisely with them. Human wisdom is not God's wisdom. Pharaoh seems to have been moved by some of the same motives, and to have used some of the tactics of some modern dictators. What he did not know was that God was with this people, and if God be with them not even the greatest nation on earth could hold them down.

Also join themselves unto our enemies. Being in the land of Goshen, the Jews were on the direct route from Egypt to Canaan. The enemies of Egypt could hardly make any other approach to Egypt than through Goshen, whether they came from the east or the north. The fear that an enemy would join forces with these Israelites and overcome Egypt, or make it possible for the Jews to leave the country, was a real cause for fear.

They built for Pharaoh store-cities. It is likely that these had to do with fortifying the country. They were depots for arms, ammunition, food, and provisions of all kinds for the armies.

And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. We are told that the word translated grieved includes more than is expressed by the English word. It expresses a mixture of loathing and alarm. (Speaker's Commentary.) They were afraid of the Jews and they hated them. The Egyptians are not the last country to have such a feeling with reference to the Jews.

They made their lives bitter with hard service. Not only were they forced to work, but the conditions under which they had to work, the cruel taskmasters beating them for slight infractions of rules, the long hours they were forced to work, and amount of work demanded, all these things served to make their lives bitter. Not only were they brickmakers, but they served in the fields.

The king of Egypt spake unto the Hebrew midwives. Scholars are divided on whether this expression means the midwives were Hebrews, or Egyptian women who were used by the Hebrews. Is it possible Pharaoh would think to succeed in getting Hebrew women to kill their own people? Verse 19 seems to indicate that these midwives were acquainted with both Hebrew and Egyptian women. These two named may have been chiefs over those who did the actual service, as two women could not possibly attend all the Hebrew mothers.

But the midwives feared God. The order of Pharaoh meant murder. These women were not of that character. They could easily have killed the child in the service of delivery without being detected, but their fear of God would not permit them to do so. If they were Egyptian women, would they thus fear God? The writer does not contend that they were Egyptian, but it is not difficult to account for Egyptian women who were continually associated with the Hebrews having sufficient fear of God to refrain from the murder of innocent children.

The Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian Women. This is the explanation the midwives gave for not killing the male children. The Hebrew women were not long in labor, and the child was usually born by the time the midwife arrived. The reason for this is obvious. Women used to hard labor, either in the fields or keeping the home, are delivered more quickly and with more ease than women who never work and never take exercise out of doors.

And God dealt well with the midwives. When God's laws and the laws of the land conflict, there is but one safe course to follow. We must obey God rather than man, regardless of the suffering it may cause us. But God is never unmindful of our suffering on account of our obedience to him. He repays us abundantly for all we suffer and sacrifice for him. In verse 21 it is said that God made households for these midwives because of their fear of him. In the Authorized Version it is said he made houses for the midwives, and some have thought Pharaoh made the houses. Adam Clarke makes the word *them* mean all the Israelites, because it is masculine gender, and so arrives at the conclusion that Pharaoh built houses for the Israelites. But it seems better to let it stand as households for the midwives as a reward for their fear of God.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

The stories of the taskmasters driving the people to work, and making life grievous for God's people, and God's plans to deliver them from such oppression will catch the attention of these departments. And Pharaoh's commandment to kill all the boy babies will be interesting to them. It will be well to compare this with Herod's effort to destroy Jesus. And the feeling of pity for the babies, the fear of God in their hearts, of these good women will be of interest to them. Appreciation for the country in which they live can be taught here, as no such thing would be allowed, much less commanded by the government.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Appreciation for the government under which we live may be a good point with which to start this lesson. Romans 13 and 1 Timothy 2 teach us that we are to pray for those in power and to be subject to them. It is a cause for thanksgiving that we live under a government that conducts its affairs generally in such way that we can obey the Lord and the government at the same time. It is cause for thanksgiving that the government does not oppress its subjects, neither does it allow one class of its citizens to oppress another. Its aim is to make and enforce such laws as will protect the weak from the oppression of the strong. In spite of its aim there are always some inequalities, and the strong are always seeking loopholes in the law which will give them the advantage of the weak. These are signs that the spirit of oppression did not die with Pharaoh, or Hitler. Hence an added reason for our thanksgiving.

The fear of God in the midwives caused them to do right in spite of danger. Anything teachers can do or say to cultivate a healthy vigorous fear of God in the hearts of these young people should be done. Fear of God restrains one in time of temptation to do wrong, and prompts one to do right when he might otherwise let it go undone. The blessing God bestowed upon the midwives for their fear is proof that we may expect to be rewarded for our obedience which springs from Godly fear. If some are inclined to think this fear is effeminate, let him remember that God says that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. One does not even begin to be wise who does not fear God.

Young People and Adult Departments

The lessons suggested in the above section are just as applicable here. The question may be raised in these departments as to why God would allow such oppression of his people over so long a period. In the first place the Jews were not free from sin, and it is possible that some of this suffering was on account of their sins. Next, this suffering served to wean them from Egypt. Had they been treated always like they were during Joseph's lifetime, they would never have wished to leave. God wanted them to go to Canaan. Again, if they had not been oppressed they might have married the Egyptians and lost their identity. Their sufferings served to cement them together into a nation. And last, suffering turned their hearts to God, their only source of help. We may find some good from much of our suffering today.

Topics for Discussion

1. The bondage of Israel is like our bondage in sin. (1) We enter it of our own will. (2) It grows worse as time wears on. (3) It is destructive of life and happiness. (4) It is unnatural. Man was made to serve God, not Satan; our powers must be perverted contrary to nature to use them in Satan's service. (5) It is exceedingly difficult to escape; man has not the power within himself. (6) Only God can deliver, and the harder the bondage the more certain are we to call upon God to help us. (7) God worked through a mediator, Moses, to deliver Israel; he works through Christ to deliver us.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading and the daily Bible readings?
What expressions are used to describe the growth of Israel in Egypt?
How many generations between Jacob and Joshua?
Can you account for the great number of people in that time?
What is suggested in the context of this lesson?
Discuss the Golden Text, and account for the multiplication of the people?
What is implied in the statement about a new king?
What is meant by his not knowing Joseph?
In what way were the Israelites more and mightier than the Egyptians?
Did Pharaoh deal wisely with the Israelites? By whose standard of wisdom?
Why did the Egyptians fear the Israelites?
At what kind of works were the Israelites used?
What command did Pharaoh give the midwives, and who were they?
Did the midwives obey, and why?
What reason did the midwives give for failure to obey, and was this true?
In what way did God reward the midwives?

Lesson XI—March 14, 1948

A LEADER CHOSEN

The Lesson Text

Ex. 3: 1-12.

1 Now Mō'sĕs was keeping the flock of Jē'thrō his father-in-law, the priest of Mĭd'ĭ-ăn: and he led the flock to the back of the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God, unto Hō'rĕb.

2 And the angel of Jĕ-hō'văh appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

3 And Mō'sĕs said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

4 And when Jĕ-hō'văh saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Mō'sĕs, Mō'sĕs. And he said, Here am I.

5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

6 Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Ī'săac, and the God of Jacob. And Mō'sĕs hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

7 And Jĕ-hō'văh said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in Ē'ğŷpt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;
8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Ē-ğŷp'tiăns, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Cā'năan-īte, and the Hīt'tīte, and the Ăm'ŏr-īte, and the Pĕr'ĭz-zīte, and the Hī'vīte, and the Jĕb'ū-sīte.
9 And now, behold, the cry of the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl is come unto me: moreover I have seen the oppression wherewith the Ē-ğŷp'tiăns oppress them.
10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Phā'raōh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl out of Ē'ğŷpt.
11 And Mō'sēs said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Phā'raōh, and that I should bring forth the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl out of Ē'ğŷpt?
12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be the token unto thee, that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Ē'ğŷpt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; and he was mighty in his words and works."* (Acts 7: 22.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ex. 4: 10-17.

Daily Bible Readings

March 8. M.....Birth of a Leader (Ex. 2: 1-10)
March 9. T.....Decision of a Leader (Ex. 2: 11-15)
March 10. W.....Stephen's View of These Matters (Acts 7: 17-36)
March 11. T.....The Leader Equipped (Ex. 4: 1-9)
March 12. F.....Paul's View of These Matters (Heb. 11: 23-29)
March 13. S.....Death of a Leader (Deut. 34: 1-8)
March 14. S.....Moses Comes Back (Matt. 17: 1-8)

Lesson Subject Explained

No movement can succeed without a leader. And the greater the movement is, the greater must the leader be. The freeing of two to three million souls from bondage to the greatest nation on earth, organizing them for a journey of forty years' duration, feeding them, judging them, and keeping them at peace with each other, and teaching them a new religion with obligations and ceremonies distasteful to them, combined to make this the greatest responsibility ever to be placed on the shoulders of one man.

The leader required for such an unusual task as this could not well be found among a people who had been enslaved for several generations with no educational advantages and reared in the environment which inevitably goes with slavery. But such a task could not be entrusted to one outside of the family of Israel. So God took one of that number out of that environment that he might get that mental development and training so necessary for such a work. Moses was adopted by the daughter of Pharaoh, educated in the best schools and universities of the nation, and was given the best social advantages the nation had to offer. But such training from his infancy might be calculated to destroy his love for his people, and his hopes for a separate nation? Yes, but God made provision for that, too. The daughter of Pharaoh could not well care for a baby so young, so a nurse was obtained. It was not an accident that the mother of the baby was hired to be his nurse. Nor was it an accident that the mother of this baby was a faithful daughter of Abraham, fired with the hopes of freedom from slavery and the privileges of living in the land promised by the Lord to her father Abraham. So while Egypt gave him the physical and mental training, she gave

him the spiritual training which determined his course in life. Educated by the best universities of the land and fired with the zeal and devotion of a saintly mother, Moses was ready for God to make a great leader of the people.

Context of the Lesson

In the context of this lesson we have the enslavement of the people, the birth of Moses, and his adoption into the family of Pharaoh. From the New Testament we learn that when he came to the age of forty he refused to be any longer the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and chose to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin in the courts of Pharaoh for a season. Moses tells us nothing about this decision that changed the whole course of his life. He simply tells us that he saw an Egyptian mistreating a Hebrew, and that Moses slew the Egyptian. Stephen tells us that Moses thought this was the way he should deliver his people, and that he thought his people would understand. But they did not understand. And when he saw two of his brethren fighting, he attempted to settle their trouble, when one of them said, "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" And Moses fled in disappointment. The next we see of him he is in the land of Midian defending the rights of some young women. One of them he soon married, and he settled down to the life of a shepherd. The universities of Egypt had given him mental training; his mother had given him spiritual training; and now God was to take forty years conditioning him to be a leader of his people. He needed patience, meekness, long-suffering, sympathetic understanding, and, above all, he needed to learn to wait upon and depend upon God. These things he could learn in the desert solitudes around Sinai.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date for this lesson is 1491 B.C. It should be remembered that this date is not universally accepted. This is the date set by Ussher, and accepted by Adam Clarke. J. McKee Adams, late professor of Biblical Archaeology, and author of a late publication (1946) in his field of work, believes the date of the Exodus was 1446 B.C. Others differ as much as two hundred years.

PLACE.—The place of this lesson in the language of the text is Horeb. This is sometimes said simply to be another name for Sinai, but strictly speaking this is not true. Others have said that Horeb was a mountain chain, but Sinai one certain peak in that chain. Smith's *Bible Dictionary* says Horeb denotes a *dry waste place,* that it was the place where the people stood while Moses went up in Mount Sinai to receive the law.

PERSONS.—Jehovah and Moses.

Golden Text Explained

Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Of what did this wisdom consist? "This wisdom, though not perhaps very deep, was multiform and manifold. It included orthography, grammar, history, theology, medicine, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and engineering. By the more advanced, poetry was read, and poetic compositions occasionally practiced." (Peloubet.) If Moses was

accepted into the priestly caste, as his position indicates, he was taught all their secrets. The universities of the time had sizeable libraries. One at Thebes contained 20,000 books, and is said to have been built by Rameses II.

"Tradition assigns the great Temple of the Sun at On, the chief university of Egypt, as the scene of his education, and, if so, his experience of Egyptian life in many striking aspects must have been wide, for the population of the Temple and its dependencies was well nigh that of a small town." (Geikie.) Then he goes on to describe the grounds and buildings of this university, and something of the social life connected with it, all of which reads a lot like life and social activities of a college of our time.

Was mighty in his words and works. This describes Moses at the time he left Egypt to go to Midian. He had already won for himself a reputation in Egypt, which increases our respect for him in making the decision to leave Egypt and cast his lot with his own people. As to his works, it is said that an Egyptian army had been defeated and that Moses was sent to take charge personally. He regrouped his forces, made a long rapid marcn and attacked the enemy from an unexpected direction, defeated them and took many of their cities. This is from Josephus, and is not to be taken too seriously.

As to Moses being mighty in words, we must understand this to be something other than eloquence, for he said he was slow of speech. (Ex. 4: 10.) The knowledge of what to say and the logic to arrange what was to be said would come from his good education. This work he did, and then gave the work of actual delivery to Aaron. This is in harmony with the record of what actually happened, and is a most likely explanation of the text.

Helps on the Lesson Text

Moses was keeping the flock of Jethro. There has been some confusion as to whether Jethro was the father-in-law or the brother-in-law of Moses. True, we have the term father-in-law here; but there are several occurrences of the Hebrew word here where it is translated brother-in-law. In Ex. 2: 18 it is said that Reuel was the father of the girl Moses married. In Num. 10: 29 it is said that Reuel was the father of Hobab and the father-in-law of Moses. Scholars usually assume that Hobab and Jethro refer to the same person. It is more likely that Reuel was too old to do the things said of Jethro as accompanying the Israelites. He was old enough to have a daughter of marriageable age forty years before the time of our lesson.

To the back of the wilderness. This is the *back* of the wilderness from where Moses lived at the time, and not from Egypt. "Across the strip of sandy plain which separates the coast of the Elanitic Gulf from the mountains, to the grassy regions beyond."

The angel of Jehovah appeared unto him. Notice here it is said that an angel appeared. But this angel said, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, etc." Also he said, "I am come down to deliver them . . . and I will send thee unto Pharaoh." And when Moses asked to whom he was speaking, this angel said, "I am that I am." We must either say that a change of persons was made, or that the angel claimed to be God. This last is the truth. The "angel of Jehovah" is a term applied to the second person of the Godhead; he wore the incommunicable name of Jehovah; he was God invisible,

though not a permanently visible form, as he later took upon himself when born of Mary.

The bush burned with fire. Moses noticed an ordinary bush burning, and yet that bush was not consumed. This served to attract the attention of Moses, and this is no doubt the primary use the Lord made of it. But yet it suggests the enduring qualities of Abraham's children in the fire of bondage in Egypt, enduring hardships and trials though not consumed.

Put off thy shoes from off thy feet. Taking off the shoes was one way of showing respect. The ground was made holy by the presence of Jehovah. Here again we find an exchange of terms. The *angel* appeared unto him, and *Jehovah* saw that he turned aside, and told him to take off his shoes. We might profit by showing respect for the place where we meet God in worship, not by taking off our shoes, but by laying aside levity, loud talk and laughter, and other things of material sort which hinder a proper appreciation of the divine.

I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham. This statement was made to identify himself with that God about whom Moses was taught by his mother. What could Moses know about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob if he did not get this information from his mother? Next, this was to identify himself with the God of the promises made to these patriarchs. God who made these promises was now coming to fulfill them.

I have heard their cry . . . I know their sorrows . . . I am come down to deliver. There is encouragement in the knowledge that God listens to his creatures, even though they be a downtrodden slave people. No one need feel that he bears his sorrows alone, if he be one of God's children. God knows our sorrows better than we know them. He knows their purpose; how great a sorrow we are able to bear; and how to make these sorrows work for our good. He came down to deliver Israel. This is accommodative language. When God does anything out of the ordinary realm of common providence, he speaks of coming down to do it. But the thought here is, he does it. He delivers us from this present evil world. (Gal. 1: 4.)

To bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large. Moses has more on which to base his faith than Abraham had. God said to Abraham, You leave what you have and I will give you a land which I will show you. Abraham left home without knowing where, or even in what direction the land lay. But God described the land to Moses. It was a land flowing with milk and honey—abounding in everything they needed. Not only did he describe it as to its contents, but he told him where it was by naming the nations which inhabited it at that time. When God made the promise to Abraham he named ten nations, but here there are only six. (Gen. 15: 19-21.) The promise of the land of the ten nations was the largest description of the promise, and included between 50,000 and 60,000 square miles. And it was actually possessed and revenue collected from its inhabitants by Solomon. (1 Kings 4: 21.)

And Moses said unto God, Who am I? This is the reply of Moses to the proposition God made to send him to Egypt to deliver the people. Who am I? He was a fugitive from Egypt; he had attempted to deliver his people and they had rejected him. Has he lost his self-confidence? Has he lost his interest in his people? Has forty years' inactivity in the wilderness made him timid, distrustful of himself?

It might take more than forty years to get *self* out of the way of God in many of us.

Certainly I will be with thee. If God be with Moses, who can stand against him? God and the least in his kingdom are a majority in any battle. In the country where the writer grew up a rich man lived. When the boys wished to brag in fun, they would say, "This old rich man and I have more money than all you fellows put together." Of course, but the boy doing the boasting had none of it. God and I are stronger than Satan, but I have nothing of which to boast; it all belongs to God. When Moses had got rid of self so that God could work with and through him, the deliverance of the people was possible.

This shall be the token unto thee. The token, sign, was that he would worship God on that very mountain. The burning bush was evidence of God's presence at that time, and as surely as God was with him in that, so surely God would be with him, and as proof of it, Moses would worship on that mountain after he had delivered the people.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

God visits a lowly shepherd. There is enough in that thought to keep the interest of these children for all the time you will have. He did not go to the mighty for a deliverer. And when God announced the birth of his Son, he did not send the angels to the king or priests; he sent his angels to the shepherds as they kept their flocks by night. God talked with this shepherd. Moses was told to take off his shoes to show reverence for God, so children can be taught respect for the worship. Here would be a good time to begin to keep children from talking and disturbing public worship. It may save some preacher the embarrassing task of calling them down publicly sometime later.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Here again reverence for God should be stressed. And these can get the idea of the dignity of this angel, being the second person of the Godhead.

This lesson affords a good opportunity to teach these young people the need of training. This part of the lesson may be divided into four heads, (1) training by his mother; (2) training in the universities; (3) training he got at the royal court; and (4) training he got alone in the desert—the university of hard-knocks.

Next, Moses was a man sent from God. (Verse 10.) When we are appointed by the elders of the church to do a work for the Lord, we may rightly feel that we are sent of God to do that work. Would we feel important if the President should send us on a mission? We ought to feel much better about doing something for God.

Young People and Adult Departments

The thoughts suggested above may be adapted to these departments.

Sometimes we think the work of saving the whole world from sin is too great for us to accomplish. We even think it impossible for us to preach the gospel to every person. Is this a greater task than Moses was called on to perform? Does it seem any more impossible

to us than his job looked to him? God's presence with him was the assurance of his success; so the presence of our Lord with us (Matt. 28: 20) is our guarantee of success. We need to realize his presence, and what it means to us. And we need to step out on our faith as Moses stepped out on his to do what God called him to do.

Topics for Discussion

1. When Pharaoh's daughter went strolling on that day she found Moses, she was pursuing her ordinary habits and inclinations. She did not know it, but she was being directed by the Lord for the accomplishments of his purposes. May we not be used by the Lord in common duties and pleasures of the day for the accomplishment of his works?

2. Moses overcame two types of temptations. (1) There was the glitter and pomp of the royal palace, with its social, political, and financial offers. Would he be ashamed of his people, his own father and mother, and have nothing to do with them? Or would he recognize them and cast his lot with them and share their fortunes? (2) He tried to deliver his people, but they did not understand; they rejected him. Now through forty years he waits in the wilderness. Will he keep his faith in what his mother taught him? Will he hold himself ready at God's call to help his people obtain the promised land?

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you get from the daily Bible readings?
What of the greatness of the task of a leader of God's people at this time?
Could such a leader for so great a task be found among the slaves? Why?
How did God use Egypt to develop a leader to take Israel from her?
Discuss the context of the lesson.
What of the date of this lesson?
Distinguish between Horeb and Sinai.
What do you know about the wisdom of the Egyptians?
What is meant by Moses being mighty in words?
In what kind of works would Moses have opportunity to distinguish himself?
Who was Jethro, Hobab, Reuel (Raguel)?
In what section of the country did Moses live?
What do you know of the angel of Jehovah?
What was the purpose of the burning bush?
Why was Moses commanded to put off his shoes?
How did God identify himself to Moses?
What three things did God say concerning his people?
What did he say of the land into which he planned to bring them?
What was the first response of Moses to God's call?
What did God's promise to be with Moses mean to him?
What did God offer as a token?

Lesson XII—March 21, 1948

MOSES DEMANDS ISRAEL'S RELEASE

The Lesson Text

Ex. 11: 4-10; Ex. 12: 29-32.

4 And Mō'sĕs said, Thus saith Jĕ-hō'văh, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Ē'gĭpt:
5 And all the first-born in the land of Ē'gĭpt shall die, from the first-born of Phā'raōh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill; and all the first-born of cattle.
6 And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Ē'gĭpt, such as there hath not been, nor shall be any more.
7 But against any of the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that Jĕ-hō'văh doth make a distinction between the Ē-gĭp'tiāns and Ĭs'rā-ĕl.
8 And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out. And he went out from Phā'raōh in hot anger.
9 And Jĕ-hō'văh said unto Mō'sĕs, Phā'raōh will not hearken unto you; that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Ē'gĭpt.
10 And Mō'sĕs and Aăr'ŏn did all these wonders before Phā'raōh: and Jĕ-hō'văh hardened Phā'raōh's heart, and he did not let the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl go out of his land.

29 And it came to pass at midnight, that Jĕ-hō'văh smote all the first-born in the land of Ē'gĭpt, from the first-born of Phā'raōh that sat on his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle.
30 And Phā'raōh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Ē-gĭp'tiāns; and there was a great cry in Ē'gĭpt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.
31 And he called for Mō'sĕs and Aăr'ŏn by night, and said, Rise up, get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl; and go, serve Jĕ-hō'văh, as ye have said.
32 Take both your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Thus saith Jehovah, Let my people go, that they may serve me."* (Ex. 8: 1b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ex. 10: 1-6.

Daily Bible Readings

March 15. M.....Moses and Aaron Commissioned (Ex. 7: 1-13)
March 16. T.....Water Turned to Blood (Ex. 7: 14-25)
March 17. W.....Frogs Brought into Egypt (Ex. 8: 1-15)
March 18. T.....Lice and Flies in Egypt (Ex. 8: 16-32)
March 19. F.....Murrain on Cattle, Boils on Man (Ex. 9: 1-12)
March 20. S.....Hail Brought upon Egypt (Ex. 9: 13-35)
March 21. S.....Locusts and Darkness in Egypt (Ex. 10: 12-29)

Lesson Subject Explained

What memories must have filled the heart of Moses as he returned to the palace where he had spent his childhood! There he had taken orders from the king. He had been sent on errands for his majesty; he had been assigned important duties to perform in behalf of the king; and he had been entrusted with important military missions, if we may depend on Josephus to give us the truth. And now he returns to this same city, and to the same government, though not the same king, to issue demands. The God over all nations, the Most High who rules over the kingdom of men, and gives power to whomsoever he will, who sets up kings and deposes them as seems right unto him, (Dan. 4: 17; 5: 18,) this Ruler of the universe had

commissioned Moses. Humbled at the realization of his own weakness, but emboldened by the assurance that Jehovah was with him, he stood before the ruler of the greatest nation on earth to give orders. Pharaoh was not accustomed to taking orders from any one, and certainly not from one dressed in the garb of a shepherd. Such an act on the part of Moses would be counted as arrogance, or even impudence; and for such his subjects ordinarily would be imprisoned, perhaps executed. But Pharaoh's response to the first visit of Moses was to say that he did not know Jehovah, to accuse Moses of keeping the people from their tasks, and ordered the taskmasters to increase the work. (Ex. 5: 1-9.)

Context of the Lesson

The context of this lesson is found in the record of the plagues which Jehovah sent upon Pharaoh and Egypt for refusing to allow God's people to leave the country. The first plague was the turning of water to blood. This plague lasted seven days. The next plague was bringing in swarms of frogs. There were frogs everywhere, in the houses, in their beds, ovens, and kneading-troughs. And when the frogs died, there were so many the land stank. But Pharaoh hardened his heart. Then Moses brought lice upon Egypt. The margin has "sand flies, or fleas," while Adam Clarke says the Hebrew word more nearly describes our tick so common in wooded sections, the kind which buries its head in the flesh. The magicians of Egypt were not able to duplicate this miracle, and they admitted the finger of God was in this. But when Pharaoh hardened his heart again, Moses brought flies upon Egypt. This time the plague did not extend to the land of Goshen, God making a distinction between the Egyptians and his people, an indication of their deliverance. The next plague was murrain on the cattle of the Egyptians, but not those of the Israelites. This was a very contagious disease which caused the head to swell, a collection of matter in the eyes and throat, and general inflammation of the body. Then the next plague was boils on the people as well as the beasts. Even the magicians had boils. The next plague was a great hail over all Egypt, except Goshen. The next plague was locusts such as Egypt had not seen before. But still Pharaoh would not let the people go. So the next plague was darkness so dense that all traffic and commerce was stopped for three days. The tenth and last plague, though not in the context, was the death of the first-born in all the land of Egypt.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date for this lesson is 1491 B.C.

PLACE.—Egypt.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Moses, Aaron, Pharaoh, and the magicians. The magician's art was highly developed in Egypt; it was part of the Egyptian religion. Whether they depended wholly upon the magician's art, or did these things through the power of an evil spirit is not known. The Jews accused Jesus of casting out demons by the evil spirits. Jesus did not deny the possibility to do such a thing, but simply said that Satan would not cast out demons. The reader will find an interesting discussion of magicians in Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, Vol. II, p. 1741.

Golden Text Explained

Thus saith Jehovah. This is a very common expression in the Bible; it occurs in one form or another hundreds of times. It was used by angels, prophets, and apostles to reveal to man the will of God. It was used to signify the authority behind the statement about to be made. Moses did not go before Pharaoh in his own name, or by his personal authority, for he had none. He was simply the mouthpiece of Jehovah.

The fact that Jehovah said for Pharaoh to let the people go should have been enough. And it would have been enough if Pharaoh had known and respected God as he should. The fact that Jehovah says a thing is right and should be done, or is wrong and should be left undone, ought to be enough for men today; and is enough for all who have the proper respect for the authority of God. But as a "thus saith Jehovah" was not enough for Pharaoh, so there are men today who require something more. Pharaoh got sufficient physical evidence to convince him that Jehovah's word is final; and all who doubt and disbelieve his word today will be given evidence of his authority in the last great day.

Let my people go, that they may serve me. God's people could not render the service he required of them as long as they remained in Egypt in the bondage of Pharaoh. Neither can men today render the service to God which delights him as long as they remain in the kingdom of Satan and in bondage to him. God delivered his people from Egypt that they might serve him; and God delivers all willing and obedient people today from the bondage of sin that they may serve him. But even after that delivery some of the people did not appreciate their freedom enough to serve Jehovah with all their hearts; so on account of the love of the world and interest in material things, there are some today who do not appreciate their delivery from the bondage of sin to serve God with all their heart, and mind, and strength. God was not pleased with those who refused to serve him, and they fell in the wilderness, this side of Jordan and the Canaan land of rest. So those who do not now serve Jehovah with all their hearts will fail to enter the eternal rest in that heavenly Canaan promised to the faithful.

Helps on the Lesson Text

About midnight will I go out. Why midnight? Perhaps because it would add to the horror of the penalty inflicted. Crying in the night has a peculiar effect on those who hear it. The cry of the Egyptian in that night was great. But we are told that Jehovah said, "I will go out." We are told that the word "I" is given the emphatic position in the Hebrew, suggesting that God did not leave the infliction of this punishment to any other. (See Ex. 12: 12, 29.) Moses simply told Pharaoh the Lord would kill all the first-born, but he did not have the part in this which he had in the other nine plagues.

All the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die. As in the case of some of the other plagues, the land of Goshen was to be spared this plague, but this time it was to be conditional. If the Israelites would sprinkle blood on their doorposts and over the door, their first-born would not die. But if they neglected to sprinkle the blood death

would visit their homes. Jehovah was to be no respecter of persons among the Egyptians, from Pharaoh's house to the home of the poorest family in the land.

There shall be a great cry throughout all the land. It is well known that the Egyptians mourned in an unusual way, and for an unusual length of time. From the works of Thomas Harmer I condense a description of such mourning. When one dies the family bursts into cries that may be heard twenty doors off; and this is renewed at different times over a period of forty days, according to the vigor of the passion. The crying begins suddenly and ends as abruptly, growing less violent each day. The longest and most violent periods of crying is when they wash the body, again when they perfume it for the last time, while carrying it to the grave, when interment is made, and when the effects of the dead are divided among the members of the family. Usually there is not a tear shed during the whole of the forty days. (Vol. III, p. 21.)

Against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue. There are two or three possible meanings suggested which are of interest. 1. Though there will be considerable stir necessary for two million people to get collected and on the march that night, yet not even will a dog bark in defiance of their march, much less the powers of Egypt. 2. Dogs are known to howl when people are crying. In all Egypt the first-born will be dead, and their families mourning and wailing loudly. The dogs will strike up a sympathetic howl throughout that land; but not so in the land of Goshen, for there will be no mourning for the first-born in that land. 3. One of the gods of the Egyptians, the son of Osiris, was worshiped under the form of a dog with a man's head. So the dog was sacred in Egypt on account of this deity. The God of the Hebrews could inflict punishment on the Egyptians for months in succession, and their deities, even the one they worshiped in the form of the dog, was unable to avenge that suffering, no, not so much as to raise a howl of protest. It was a victory of Jehovah over the gods of Egypt. "Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am Jehovah." (Ex. 12: 12.)

Thy servants shall come down . . . and bow down . . . unto me. These are the words of Moses to Pharaoh; a prediction of the effects of the next plague to be brought upon them. Moses predicted that the next plague would be so terrible in its effects that the Egyptians would beg them to leave the land. It proved to be literally true.

That my wonders may be multiplied. The hardness of Pharaoh's heart gave the Lord an opportunity to display his power. Had Pharaoh consented for the people to go after the first or second plague, or the fifth, neither the Egyptians, Hebrews, or the surrounding nations would have had such an insight to the wonderful power of Jehovah. The delay occasioned by the hardness of Pharaoh's heart contributed to the advantage of the Jews in at least three ways. "1. It gave them time to organize themselves, and make all necessary preparations for a sudden departure. 2. It deeply impressed the Egyptians, and led them to abstain from all interference with the Israelites for about three centuries. 3. It impressed the neighboring nations also to some extent, and either prevented them from offering opposition to the Israelites, or made them contend with less heart, and so with less success against them." (*Pulpit Commentary.*)

And Jehovah hardened Pharaoh's heart. After several of these plagues it is said that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. God hardened Pharaoh's heart only as he furnished the occasion for his stubbornness. Pharaoh was the kind of man who was so selfish he did not want to see his slaves get away from him; he was so stubborn that he would suffer much, and allow his people to suffer more, before he would lose his slaves. By removing the plagues each time he was encouraged to think the suffering was over and he would get to keep his slaves. His greed for wealth and his lust for power caused him to change his mind. Since God relieved the suffering by taking away the plague, it is said that God hardened his heart. Surely none can think God miraculously operated on his heart to cause him to do wrong. This would make God a party to the sins of Pharaoh, and this is unthinkable.

And it came to pass at midnight. This is a record of the fulfilling of the prediction made by Moses. Notice that every thing Moses said actually occurred, for there was not a house where there was not one dead. His servants went for Moses and Aaron and Pharaoh actually begged them to leave the country. Privileges, such as taking the children and cattle with them, all these, and more were freely granted. "The Egyptians were urgent upon the people, to send them out of the land in haste." So again we are taught to believe that which Abraham believed in the long ago, What God had promised, he was also able to perform. (Rom. 4: 21.)

And bless me also. This is the request of Pharaoh. Was he sincere? Surely he had been convinced of the superiority of Jehovah over the gods of Egypt. He had suffered all the judgments of Jehovah he wished; if there is anything else to come from Jehovah, let it be a blessing. But that he was willing to change his ways or his faith in order to get this blessing we have no intimation. Too many people want the Lord to bless them just as they are, and allow them to go on in their present sinful ways.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

A review of the birth of Moses, and his decision to identify himself with his people rather than stay in the palace of the king, will be in order in these departments. Then the courage of Moses as he returned to deliver the people, his kindness to Pharaoh in asking him to let them go; and then the goodness of God to Pharaoh may be taught here in a passage where it is often overlooked. Nine times God took away the plagues from him when he requested it. God was not obligated to give him so many opportunities to do the right thing. So God gives us time and opportunities to repent of our mistakes. But if we, like Pharaoh, persist in sin, awful judgments will be sent upon us at last. God's goodness in sparing the first-born of the Israelites should be stressed in this lesson.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The wages of sin is death, is a good lesson to stress in these sections. These young people are old enough to know what sin is, and they should be taught the folly of sin, and the inevitable consequence of continuing in sin in spite of the mercies of God shown us in more ways than we can count.

God is a person with whom we must reckon. These young people are getting into the age when they are prone to think it smart to be irreligious. Many of them drop out of Sunday school, and think it smart to sit in the rear of the audience at the hour of worship and act disinterested and bored. Pharaoh came to the place and time in life where he could not dispose of God; he had to deal with him. He chose to oppose him. He made an unwise choice. These lessons should be pressed upon these students.

Young People and Adult Departments

God started with Abraham to found a nation and give that nation a land in which to live. Pharaoh stood in God's way. The purposes of God and Pharaoh crossed; God won. It is never right nor safe to oppose God, to have purposes at variance with God. It should be our deepest concern to learn the purposes of God, and then live in harmony with them; it should be our delight to suffer and sacrifice whatever necessary to make a real contribution to the accomplishment of God's purposes.

The teachers in these departments should make special preparation on the question of God hardening Pharaoh's heart, for it will surely come up, and some may have some real difficulty as to his faith on account of a misunderstanding of the question.

Topics for Discussion

1. Pharaoh offered to make concessions to Moses, and these have a meaning for us. (1) After the fourth plague Pharaoh said, I will let you go, only don't go far. (Ex. 8: 28.) The devil says now, If you must serve the Lord, don't go at it wholeheartedly; don't leave me very far, don't be a fanatic, just go a little ways and do but little for God. (2) After the seventh plague, hail, Pharaoh called for Moses to suggest another compromise. Just take the men to worship; leave the women and children here in Egypt. Since they were determined to worship, it would be enough for none but the men. The devil suggests such compromises today. Leave your children at home; they are too much trouble, and they make too much fuss; the preacher doesn't like for the baby to cry, or the children to "twist and turn" on the pews. (3) After the ninth plague, darkness, he offered his third compromise. He said, Go, go as far as you please to worship, but leave your cattle and sheep. The devil says to people now, Worship God if you must, and take your children if you insist, but leave your earthly possessions with me; there is no need to use your material possessions for the honor of God, let me use them to build up my kingdom. And, sad, but true, he gets by with a lot of brethren on such a proposition.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?

What did you get from the Devotional Reading?

What did you get from the daily Bible reading?

What do you think were the memories and emotions of Moses as he first went to Pharaoh?

What do you think Pharaoh thought of Moses after that first interview?

Can you name the plagues in order, and tell what was effected by them?
What was the Time and Place of this lesson?
What do you know of the magicians of Egypt?
What is the significance of the term "Thus saith Jehovah"?
Why was it necessary for the people to leave Egypt to serve Jehovah?
What is suggested by this as to the relationship in which we must serve God?
At what time was the first-born to be taken? Why?
On what condition was Israel spared the tenth plague?
What do you know about the mourning for the dead in Egypt?
What is meant by a dog not moving his tongue in this text?
What prediction did Moses make about the servants of Pharaoh?
What good came to Israel by the stubbornness of Pharaoh?
How was Pharaoh's heart hardened?
What was the effect of the tenth plague upon Pharaoh and his people?
What request did Pharaoh make of Moses after the tenth plague?
What compromises did Pharaoh offer Moses, and what application can you make of them in the life of Christians today?

Lesson XIII—March 28, 1948

JOSHUA SUCCEEDS MOSES

The Lesson Text

Deut. 34: 9; Josh. 1: 1-6; 21: 43-45.

9 And Jŏsh'ū-ȧ the son of Nūn was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Mō'sĕs had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Ĭs'rȧ-ĕl hearkened unto him, and did as Jē-hō'văh commanded Mō'sĕs.

1 Now it came to pass after the death of Mō'sĕs the servant of Jē-hō'văh, that Jē-hō'văh spake unto Jŏsh'ū-ȧ the son of Nūn, Mō'sĕs' minister, saying,
2 Mō'sĕs 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 Ĭs'rȧ-ĕl.
3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, to you have I given it, as I spake unto Mō'sĕs.
4 From the wilderness, and this Lĕb'ȧ-nŏn, even unto the great river, the river Eū-phrȧ'tēs, all the land of the Hĭt'tītes, 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 Mō'sĕs, 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.

43 So Jē-hŏ'văh gave unto Ĭs'rȧ-ĕl all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein.
44 And Jē-hō'văh gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; Jē-hō'văh delivered all their enemies into their hand.
45 There failed not aught of any good thing which Jē-hō'văh had spoken unto the house of Ĭs'rȧ-ĕl; all came to pass.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"But as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah."* (Josh. 24: 15b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Josh. 24: 29-31.

Daily Bible Readings

March 22. M. ..... Joshua, the Military Leader (Ex. 17: 8-16)
March 23. T. ..... Joshua, Minister to Moses (Ex. 24: 12-18)

March 24. W.....Joshua, a Young Man (Ex. 33: 7-11)
March 25. T.....Joshua, One of Twelve Spies (Num. 13: 16, 25-33)
March 26. F.....Joshua, a Man of Courage (Num. 14: 1-10)
March 27. S.....Joshua Given an Inheritance (Josh. 19: 49-51)
March 28. S.....Joshua's Farewell Address (Josh. 24: 19-28)

Lesson Subject Explained

When the children of Israel had wandered in the wilderness for forty years, it was God's pleasure to bring them into the land he had promised their fathers. But it was not God's will that Moses should have the satisfaction of bringing the people into that land. When the people were at Kadesh there was no water, so God told Moses to speak to the rock for water. Instead of speaking to the rock Moses struck the rock. He got the water, but God said to him, "Because ye believed not in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." (Num. 20: 12.) And at the end of the journey for Moses God told him to go up into the mountain of Abarim to behold the land which he would give to the children of Israel, but he was not to be allowed to enter because he rebelled against God's word in the wilderness of Zin. (Num. 27: 12-14.) Notice that God charged him with *rebellion* because he struck the rock instead of speaking to it. This seems a pathetic case. Here is an old man who spent forty years waiting on God that he might serve him, and then he spent forty years serving him as leader of a people who were so rebellious and hard to get along with that God was provoked with them; his dream, his one ambition in life was to take the people into the promised land. But now he is denied that privilege. Moses even begged for the privilege, saying, "Let me go over, I pray thee, and see the good land that is beyond the Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But Jehovah was wroth with me for your sakes, and hearkened not unto me; and Jehovah said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter." (Deut. 3: 25, 26.) For these reasons it was necessary that a new leader be chosen to take the people across Jordan.

Context of the Lesson

Between the last lesson and this one we have the deliverance of the people from the bondage of Egypt, and the giving of the law of Moses on Sinai; their journey to the border of the land where spies were sent over to see the land; we have their report and the rebellion of the people; then they were turned back into the wilderness to wander thirty-eight more years, making one year for each day the spies had been in the land.

In the immediate context of this lesson one of the most interesting things is the speech Moses made, in which he recounted their experiences from the time they left Egypt until the day he was told to go up into the mountain to view the land, and die. (Deut. 32.) And another thing of unusual interest is that part of his speech in which he tells them the fearful consequences of their sins. (Deut. 28.) After telling them how they would be blessed if they would keep the commandments of God, he turned to the curses that would come upon them if they disobeyed God. He told them they would have a king over them, but that both they and their king would be carried away into captivity, and that they would "become an astonishment,

a proverb, and a byword, among all the peoples whither Jehovah shall lead thee away." And he described the siege of Jerusalem under the Romans and said it would come to pass that people would eat their own children, even "the tender and delicate woman among you, who would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness" would eat her child. (Deut. 28: 37-57.) And we are told that these very things happened in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. No one can read this twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, and then read the history of the Jews, without being impressed with the fact that Moses had help from above in writing it.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date for our lesson is 1451 B.C.

PLACE.—Plains of Moab before Mount Nebo. When Brother J. W. McGarvey visited that section of Palestine his guide showed him what was called Nebo, and the traditional spot where Moses viewed the land. But Brother McGarvey could not see what Moses is said to have seen, so he looked for a mountain which would give him the view that Moses had. To the southwest of the traditional spot he found a mountain, "and here all the requirements of the scripture text are met . . . This knob, then, is the Pisgah on the top of which Moses stood to obtain his last view of the Promised Land. It is said that he went up from the plains of Moab into the mountain of Nebo to the top of Pisgah that is over against Jericho, and here is Nebo with Pisgah (height) as its most western summit from which all can be seen which Moses saw." (*Lands of the Bible,* p. 373.) And he further states that the people of Israel could have seen Moses from their tent doors up to the moment he lay down in death.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Moses, Joshua, and the children of Israel.

Golden Text Explained

But as for me and my house. Joshua had just told the people to choose that day whom they would serve; if they wished, they might serve the gods of the nations where their fathers had lived. He exhorted them to think about the matter; give it careful consideration, for this is a matter which will bear investigation. He indicated that he had already considered the matter and had reached his decision. Four thoughts may be suggested here in connection with Joshua's decision, as follows:

1. Not my house without me. He said "as for me and my house." Religion is for both the house and the head of the house. There are some men who want their families to be religious, but they think they do not have time, or they cannot make a living in this world of keen competition and be a Christian too. They send their children to Sunday school, and provide a way for the family to go to church, but they spend the day playing golf or fishing. Not so with Joshua, his house would serve the Lord as well as he.

2. Not I without my house. Joshua was not one to make a resolution for himself and not include his house in it; he would see to it that his house followed him in this wise choice. Of Abraham it was said, "For I have known him, to the end that he may command

his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice." (Gen. 18: 19.) Joshua was a true child of Abraham. But there are some men, and parents, who take little or no responsibility in seeing to it that their children are brought up in the "chastening and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 6: 4.) They show a keen interest in the material welfare of the children, but sadly neglect their spiritual welfare.

3. First I, and then my house. Joshua realized his obligation as the head of the house to set the example. A man who does not have enough influence to determine the course of life of his own children with whom he is constantly associated, and over whom he can exercise authority, will certainly not have sufficient influence to tell in the lives of the public. For this reason men who have not influenced their own children to be faithful Christians are not qualified to be shepherds and overseers in the church of the Lord.

4. Joshua and his house would serve the Lord if they had to do it alone. His decision did not depend upon what others would do about it. Though they all went after the gods of the nations, Joshua and his house would still serve Jehovah. That is the decision we must make today. But young people, especially, are prone to wait on others, and to do what the majority of their crowd is doing. Make your own decisions! No one else will, or can, answer for you in the judgment; it behooves you to make your decision for life in view of the answer you will have to give in the judgment.

Helps on the Lesson Text

And Joshua the son of Nun. Josephus says Joshua was eighty-five years old at this time. He was of the tribe of Ephraim. (1 Chron. 7: 20, 27.) He is first mentioned as leading the fight against Amalek at Rephidim. (Ex. 17: 9.) In Num. 27: 17-23 we have the record of his commission and ordination as the successor of Moses to be the leader of his people.

Was full of the spirit of wisdom. It is also said of him, "in whom is the Spirit." (Num. 27: 18.) But the statement of our text seems to refer to his disposition to be wise and sagacious in the handling of the people. This he would surely need, both in his military operations, and in the allotment of the land among the tribes in such a way as to satisfy all of them. And this Joshua succeeded in doing in an admirable manner.

And the children of Israel hearkened unto him. If Moses, or his family, felt overlooked in that the leadership was not kept in the family, they made no trouble about it. Judah was spoken of by Jacob as bearing the ruler's staff (Gen. 49: 10,) but if his family objected to Joshua of the tribe of Ephraim being chosen as leader, they raised no fuss about it. The people of Israel respected Joshua as long as he lived. "And the people served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of Jehovah that he had wrought for Israel." (Judges 2: 7.)

Go over this Jordan. "A river that has never been navigable, flowing into a sea that has never known a port—has never been a high road to more hospitable coasts—has never possessed a fishery—a river that has never boasted of a single town of eminence upon

its banks. It winds through scenery remarkable rather for sameness and tameness than for bold outline. Its course is not much above two hundred miles from first to last, less than one fifteenth of that of the Nile—from the roots of the Anti-Lebanon, where it bursts forth from various sources in all its purity, to the head of the Dead Sea, where it loses itself and its tributaries in the unfathomable brine. Such is the river of the 'great plain' of Palestine—the 'Descender'—if not 'the river of God' in the book of Psalms, at least that of his chosen people throughout their history." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary.*)

Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon. It has been suggested that this expression was intended to convey the idea that the land could be taken simply by their walking through it, in something of the manner in which Jericho was taken; and such they might have done if they had kept themselves from sin. Their first reverse in battle was on account of the sin of Achan. (Josh. 7: 11, 12.)

From the wilderness, . . . unto the river Euphrates, . . . unto the great sea . . . shall be your border. The great sea here means the Mediterranean. However they did not soon possess all this territory, yet in the days of David and Solomon the whole of this territory was in actual possession. (See Lesson III.)

There shall not any man be able to stand before thee. This was to give Joshua courage in the outset of his great undertaking. And the reason why no man would be able to stand before Joshua and his armies is immediately stated in these words, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." This has always been the promise of God to those who love him and serve him. It is as much our promise today, as it was his at that time. On account of that Paul exhorts us to be free from the love of money, and be content with what we have. (Heb. 13: 5.)

Be strong and of good courage. Why should Joshua be strong and courageous if God was going to *give* him all the land he walked upon? God's promises are usually conditional, though the condition may not be mentioned at the time of the promise. A little later God told Joshua he had given the city of Jericho to him; but it was still necessary for him to march around it thirteen times to get the city. God was giving them the land, but it would take strength and courage for them to possess it.

So Jehovah gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers. This passage has been used before in this series of lessons as proof of the fact that the land promise was completely fulfilled. The Jews need not look for the Lord to give them the land of Canaan in fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham, for that promise has been fulfilled. Solomon ruled over all the land from Euphrates to the land of the Philistines, and unto Egypt. (1 Kings 4: 21.)

There failed not aught of any good thing . . . all came to pass. This promise has reference to the material blessings, the land promise, which God made to the fathers. Certainly the seed promise, which included the Christ, was not under consideration in this statement. All came to pass; this is characteristic of God's promises. No one can truthfully say that God has failed in any promise he ever made. When God's promises are conditional, and people do not meet the

conditions, God refuses to give what was promised. But the fault is not in God; his promise has not failed. Men fail, and God in justice and righteousness withholds what was promised. But when men show a willingness to do what God commands, his promises are always kept.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Here again we have a character who is always interesting to children. The death of Moses and the appointment of Joshua; the disappointment of Moses on account of his sin, and the great duties of Joshua; the goodness and humility of Moses, and the courage of Joshua—these and other thoughts concerning these men will thrill these students.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Joshua had been the minister of Moses for forty years, so had been preparing a long time for the duties he took upon himself at this time. He had done faithfully the little things of life, so was ready for the big opportunity. Too many people today wish to do nothing but the big things; and if the little jobs are offered they turn from them in disgust. One who is not willing to do the little thing, is not big enough to do big things.

Joshua was commanded to be courageous. But he had no greater need for courage than we have in our battles against sin today. Young people need courage to refrain from wrong in the social gatherings, in their recreational activities, and on their dates. Those who think Christianity is for weaklings should try living up to the law of Christ.

Young People and Adult Departments

The influence which Joshua had upon the people of his generation, and of that which immediately followed is unusual. (Judges 2: 6, 7.) No doubt this was due to the fact that he made the choice mentioned in our Golden Text, and that he lived in harmony with that choice. In these departments this lesson cannot be stressed too much. We must seek to influence people for God. It is not a matter of living our lives and saving our own souls; we must make opportunities to influence others, and save the souls of others.

Joshua was a wise man. He dealt wisely with the problems of the people. We need wise leadership in the churches today more than anything else. To deal wisely with the problems of the church, men must be willing to spend much time in (1) thinking and planning for the church; (2) studying their Bibles to see what is the will of the Lord in such matters as confront them; and (3) praying for wisdom from God to do the right thing. Until leaders of the church are willing to give this amount of time to the church we will suffer for leadership. Men who have time for their lodges and civic clubs, but do not have time for the business meetings of the church should be denied the privilege of leadership in the church.

Topics for Discussion

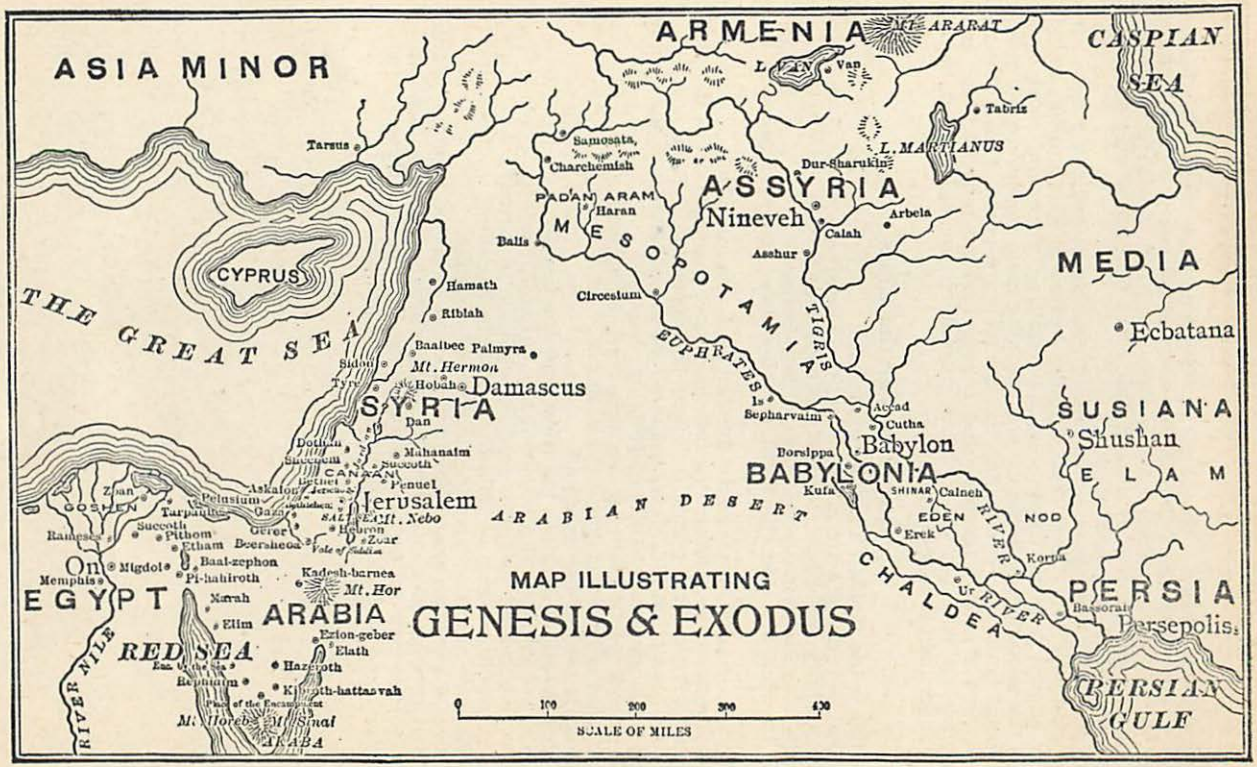
1. The death of one good man, even the best and greatest, does not stop God's work. The people may have felt like saying, What can we

do without Moses? So some churches today use few in the leadership, and sometimes they think they could not get along without them. And sometimes certain individuals get the idea the whole thing would die if they should quit. But God has a way of getting along without the best of us.

2. Moses was not so much missed because he had not done all the work himself, and had been training Joshua as his minister, helper. So church leaders today should be putting more and more work on the shoulders of younger men, training them for service now, and especially to take over when the old men are gone. One difference between a good leadership and a poor leadership is that the good leadership will not be so much missed on account of not having younger men to take over.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you get from the daily Bible readings?
Why was Moses not allowed to go into Canaan?
With what did God charge him? May some of us be guilty of that sin?
How much did Moses regret his failure to go into Canaan?
How much time between the last lesson and this one?
What are the high points in Moses' last speech to the people?
What prediction did Moses make about the obedience of the people?
What do you know of the place of our lesson?
Discuss the four points concerning the Golden Text.
Of what tribe and family was Joshua?
What is said of his wisdom?
What is said of Joshua's influence over the people?
What is said in our lesson about the Jordan River?
How much land was promised the children of Israel?
Why would no man be able to stand before Joshua?
What two qualities were to characterize Joshua?
Can you locate on a map the borders of the land God gave the people?
What promise God made to the fathers was completely fulfilled?
Does God ever refuse to give men what he promises them?
Name some of God's promises to us that are conditional.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GENESIS & EXODUS
ASIA MINOR
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MT. ARARAT
CASPIAN SEA
L. VAN
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Tabriz
L. MARTIANUS
Tarsus
Samosata
Charchemish
Dur-Sharukin
ASSYRIA
PADAN ARAM
Haran
Nineveh
Arbela
Calah
Balis
MESOPOTAMIA
Asshur
MEDIA
CYPRUS
Hamath
Circesium
Riblah
THE GREAT SEA
Baalbec
Palmyra
Ecbatana
Sidon
Mt. Hermon
Hobah
Damascus
EUPHRATES
TIGRIS
SYRIA
Dan
Is
Sepharvaim
Accad
Cutha
SUSIANA
Dothan
Mahanaim
Shushan
Shechem
Succoth
Borsippa
Babylon
CANAAN
Penuel
BABYLONIA
ELAM
Zoan
Askalon
Jerusalem
Kufa
SHINAR
Calneh
GOSHEN
Pelusium
Tarpanhes
Gaza
Mt. Nebo
ARABIAN DESERT
EDEN
NOD
Succoth
Gerer
Hebron
Rameses
Pithom
Beersheba
Zoar
Erek
RIVER
Vale of Siddim
Baal-zephon
On
Migdol
Kadesh-barnea
Korna
Memphis
Pi-hahiroth
Mt. Hor
CHALDEA
Ur
RIVER
PERSIA
EGYPT
Marah
ARABIA
Bassorah
Elim
Persepolis
Ezion-geber
RED SEA
Elath
RIVER NILE
Hazeroth
Rephidim
Kibroth-hattaavah
Place of the Encampment
Mt. Horeb
Mt. Sinai
AKABA
PERSIAN GULF
0
100
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SCALE OF MILES

SECOND QUARTER

THE LAWS OF ISRAEL

AIM.—*To learn the laws that God gave for the government of his chosen people under the Jewish Age, and to see how these laws led the people to Christ.*

Lesson I—April 4, 1948

ISRAEL AT MOUNT SINAI

The Lesson Text

Ex. 19: 7-15

7 And Mō'sēs came and called for the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which Jē-hō'văh commanded him.
8 And all the people answered together, and said, All that Jē-hō'văh hath spoken we will do. And Mo'sēs reported the words of the people unto Jē-hō'văh.
9 And Jē-hō'văh said unto Mō'sēs, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and may also believe thee for ever. And Mō'sēs told the words of the people unto Jē-hō'văh.
10 And Jē-hō'văh said unto Mō'sēs, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their garments,
11 And be ready against the third day; for the third day Jē-hō'văh will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sī'nāi.
12 And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death:
13 No hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, he shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.
14 And Mō'sēs went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their garments.
15 And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not near a woman.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"*The mountains quaked at the presence of Jehovah, even yon Sinai at the presence of Jehovah, the God of Israel.*" (Judges 5: 5a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ex. 19: 1-6.

Daily Bible Readings

March 29. M.....Sinai Trembled at His Presence (Ps. 68: 1-8)
March 30. T.....God Spoke from the Cloud (Ps. 99: 1-9)
March 31. W.....The Earth Trembled at His Presence (Ps. 114: 1-8)
April 1. T.....God Remembered His Covenant (Ps. 105: 1-22)
April 2. F.....Deliverance of Israel (Ps. 105: 23-45)
April 3. S.....Israel in Rebellion (Ps. 106: 6-27)
April 4. S.....More of Israel's Sins (Ps. 106: 28-48)

Lesson Subject Explained

The aim of the lessons of last quarter was to learn of the origin and development of the nation of Israel. We trace the development of that people from Abraham, the founder, through Isaac, Jacob, and his sons in their experiences in Canaan and Egypt. We have now seen them come out of Egypt and gather before the frowning heights of Sinai, where they are to be organized into a nation, and where they are to be given laws that shall direct and control them for several hundred years. It was here in the shadow

of Sinai that they camped for their longest stop thus far in their wanderings; it was here that their leader went into the mountain to receive the tables of stone on which were written the ten commandments which served as the basis of all their laws, and the pattern for all moral laws of many nations to this day; and it was here that the people manifested the great need of laws and a leader to enforce those laws to keep them from going into the same idolatrous worship they had seen practiced by heathens in Egypt.

Sinai was called the "mount of God." (Ex. 3: 1; 4: 27; 18: 5; 24: 13.) It is said that while Moses was tending his sheep that he came to the mount of God, unto Horeb, Sinai. Though this incident was before the law was given, it is doubtful if Sinai was ever called the mount of God until after the law was given there. This record was written after the law was given, and the writer used a term familiar to his readers at the time of his writing, though not used to refer to the mountain at the time of the incident about which he was writing.

Context of the Lesson

In the immediate context of this lesson we find the record of the crossing of the Red Sea, and the singing of the song of deliverance when their enemies had been destroyed in the sea. Their journey in the wilderness was not without its discouragements. In fact it seems there were more things to discourage them than there were to encourage them. The first discouragement was *no water*. And in spite of the great deliverance they had just experienced, they complained. Then they came to Marah and found water, but it was bitter.

They had been gone from Egypt but one month when they complained because of hunger. It was then they wished they had never left Egypt where they could sit by the fleshpots, and "eat bread to the full." (Ex. 16: 3.) Then God promised to send them manna every morning, except on the Sabbath, and he sent them quails in the evenings, to let them know that Jehovah was God. (Ex. 16: 12.)

On another occasion they became thirsty, and were so vexed about the matter that they were about ready to stone Moses. God told Moses to strike the rock in Horeb and it would supply plenty of water. Following this the Amalekites attacked them. This is the time when Moses held up his hands and the armies prevailed, but when he became tired and let down his hands the army lost ground. So Aaron and Hur held up his hands, while Joshua led the armies of Israel to a great victory. (Ex. 17.)

About this time Jethro, the kinsman of Moses, visited him and gave him some good advice about the organization of his work. Moses was trying to settle all disputes that arose among the people. It was too much for him. Jethro suggested the appointment of "Able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain" to be rulers of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. Moses took the advice, appointed the men who "judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves." (Ex. 18.) This all happened while they were at Rephidim, which was their last stop before they came to Sinai. The reader should notice that the "rock in Horeb" which furnished water for the people (Ex. 17: 1-7) was at Rephidim, so that the term Horeb included more than the mountain called Sinai.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date for the lesson is 1491 B.C. The month is said to be the third of the ecclesiastical year, which was Sivan. It was the ninth month of the civil year, and corresponds with the last few days of our May and most of June. It seems to have been the first day of the month when they reached Sinai. The term *same day* (Ex. 19: 1) being given that meaning by most accepted authorities. In verse 11 we have mentioned the *third day,* but this is not to be taken as meaning the third day of the month, but rather the third day from the time God was talking to Moses. According to Horne's count the law was given on the 6th day of the month. (*Introduction to the Scriptures,* Vol. III, p. 180.) But if that be true it was more than fifty days from the feast of the Passover in Egypt to the giving of the law. They killed the lamb on the 14th of the month, and left after midnight, which was the 15th of the month. (Ex. 12.) Since there were thirty days in that month, they traveled sixteen days. There were twenty-nine days in the next month, Zif. So they marched forty-five days from Goshen to Sinai. If the law was not given until the 6th of the month, that would have made fifty-one days from the Passover to the giving of the law. It is supposed that the law was given on the day which afterwards was called Pentecost. The best of scholars have differed on the exact number of days, so we need not be discouraged if we do not all arrive at the same number; nor is there a matter of faith involved.

PLACE.—Sinai.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Moses, and the children of Israel.

Golden Text Explained

The mountains quaked at the presence of Jehovah. This verse of scripture is a part of the song of praise Deborah and Barak sang when they had defeated Sisera, the captain of Jabin, king of Canaan, and all his army. Deborah was a prophetess who dwelt under a palm tree between Ramah and Bethel in the hill-country of Ephraim. (Judges 4: 5.) Barak was the military leader of the people at that time, but he refused to go to battle without the prophetess going along with him. This seemed to Deborah a rather effeminate thing to do, so she said she would go, but Barak would not get any credit for the victorious outcome of the campaign. The armies of Israel completely routed the enemy, and the leader was slain by a woman of whom he asked rest and shelter. After this it is said they had rest from their enemies for forty years.

The whole song is one of praise to Jehovah because of his greatness, his power to overcome all enemies, and his willingness to come to the help of his people. The thought expressed in our Golden Text is the reverence due such a God. Even the mountains quaked at his presence, yea, even yon Sinai quaked at the presence of such a majestic Being. If nature quakes at his presence; if the mountains, great masses of rock built upon more solid rock, tremble at his presence, why should not men tremble when in his presence. Two classes of people are here suggested as being in need of such a disposition. First, the enemies of Jehovah may well tremble in fear of so great and mighty a Being as Jehovah. Next, the children of God may well tremble in his presence. Not through fear of being

consumed and destroyed, as will be the enemies of God, but we should tremble in fear of doing wrong, of failing to gain his favor and approval. One of the greatest needs of churches today is the cultivation of reverence in the presence of Jehovah. Israel had a demonstration of the power of Jehovah over all the gods of Egypt in the plagues, and in their deliverance from Egypt at the Red Sea. They had a manifestation of his glory and majesty at Sinai. These experiences were for the purpose of cultivating reverence.

Helps on the Lesson Text

Moses came and called for the elders. Moses had been in the mountain with God to receive instructions. God had informed Moses that a covenant was about to be made, and he wanted to get an expression from the people. The proposition was put in these words, "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." (Ex. 19: 5, 6.) Moses was told to go down to the people and put this proposition up to them to see what would be their answer.

All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do. By this they meant they would obey his voice indeed, and keep his covenant. This is all that Jehovah had spoken up to this time which they could do. Though God had not told them what the commandments would be, yet in the presence of the God who had delivered them from bondage, and had borne them on "eagles' wings" to a place of safety, and knowing that God would not require anything impossible or unreasonable of them they were willing to promise obedience before knowing in detail what that obedience would require of them. That, if it had been really from the heart, was really true complete submission to the Lord. That is the attitude so much needed today on the part of the children of God.

I come unto thee in a thick cloud. Man is unable to look upon God and live, so he must veil himself in some way every time he appears. Sometimes God appeared to man in human form. Christ was God veiled in human flesh. On this occasion God thought best to veil himself in a thick cloud; the word *thick* suggesting the absolute necessity for such a covering from the eyes of the people. The purpose of coming in the thick cloud was to get close enough to the people that they might hear him speak to Moses; and he wanted them to hear him so that they might believe in Moses as the representative of God.

Go unto the people, and sanctify them. The word *sanctify* means to set apart to a holy service. Since those thus set apart must be pure and clean, there was the accompanying service of purification. So they were required to wash their garments. And in such purifications they usually washed their bodies, though no mention is made of it here.

The third day Jehovah will come down in the sight of all the people. Today and tomorrow they were to make their preparation, and on the third day Jehovah was to come down. It has been suggested that some might be skeptical of the report made by Moses. If so they would have time to think the matter over, and be on guard for any art of deception. Though he was to be veiled in a thick cloud so

that none could actually see him, yet it is here said that he would be in the sight of all people.

And thou shalt set bounds unto the people. These words seem to signify a fence or barrier of some sort to be made by man, not a line made by nature and marked out or pointed out by man beyond which the people must not go.

Take heed to yourselves. This is a warning to them not to go into the mountain, and not even to touch it. Neither was a beast to touch the mountain. One writer says he had always wondered at this statement until he had seen Sinai. How could a man touch a mountain? It is difficult to know just when one gets on a mountain. There are usually low rolling hills, and then higher peaks to ascend before one actually gets on a mountain. Such is true with several peaks of the Rocky Mountains which the writer has ascended. But the author mentioned said when he reached Sinai he could understand why people were warned not to touch Sinai. This mountain rises almost perpendicular from the plain on which the people were camped. It is a mass of granite 1800 feet high. Its surface is broken by valleys, or great ravines, on the sides of which grow timber. It was through one of these that Moses was able to go up to meet God.

Whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death. This was the penalty for the curious or careless. And even the animals that got too close in grazing were to be stoned. Neither man nor beast who touched the mountain were to be touched by other people; they were to be stoned, or shot through on the spot.

When the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount. All the commentaries at hand find a difficulty here in harmonizing this statement with what was said in the preceding verse. One harmonizes the two statements by saying that for a time they were forbidden to touch the mount, but at the sounding of the trumpet they would have the privilege of touching it, even to go up to investigate to see if there was any fraud or deception attempted. The more reasonable view to take of the matter seems to be that none were to touch the mount at any time during the manifestation of God. But at the sounding of the trumpet all the people were to gather as closely to the mount as possible without touching it. They were encamped over the whole plain, some of them being several miles from the bounds set beyond which they were not to go. The trumpet was to be sounded as a warning that the presence of the Lord was expected at once, and the people were to gather, to come as close as they could without violating the regulations.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

This lesson affords a splendid opportunity for the use of sand tables and flannel boards, and by the careful use of them a deep impression may be made on the children of these departments. Reverence for God on account of his power, majesty, and holiness is the central theme of the lesson.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Here again reverence is the main point to be stressed. And holiness on our part both in heart and life should receive the attention of these departments. As the people washed their garments in

preparation for the presence of God, so we must cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2 Cor. 7: 1.) Those who violated God's restrictions in these matters were to be stoned without mercy. Those today who pay no attention to God's will concerning the regulations he has made with reference to our lives will have to pay the penalty. The fact that the penalty is deferred instead of being executed immediately as was the case then, is no proof that the penalty will not surely be executed.

Young People and Adult Departments

The lessons suggested above should receive the attention of these departments. Moses was allowed to go into the presence of God, not close enough to see him face to face, but closer than any others were allowed to go. Then Aaron and the elders, either on this occasion or later, were allowed to go part of the way, but the people remained at a distance. (Ex. 24: 1-3.) These matters suggest our need of a mediator between us and God. Moses took the word of God to the people, and their reply back to God. But Jesus Christ is our mediator; he has revealed the will of God to us, and he carries our prayers to God and is our Advocate at the throne of mercy. How we should love him and serve him for this most wonderful service he preforms for us! Never shall we be able to do enough for him to pay him; never shall we be able to praise him enough adequately for his kindness; never shall we be able to thank him properly for his goodness.

Topics for Discussion

1. For three days the people made preparations for the presence of Jehovah. We assemble with little thought that for an hour we shall be worshiping in the presence of God. For that communion with God little, and with many no, preparation is made. Should we not sanctify our minds? set them apart to things of a holy nature?

2. The writer of Heb. 12: 18-29 uses these happenings at Sinai to teach us the superiority of the gospel dispensation over that of the law of Moses. If these physical demonstrations impressed the people with the power, majesty, and holiness of God, how much more should we be impressed who have experienced salvation through the gospel, and who entertain the hope of eternal life in heaven instead of an earthly home in Canaan?

3. If these manifestations to his people for the purpose of saving them were so awful that the people could not bear to look upon them; if God's voice of love and salvation was so terrible that the people could not listen to him, how will his appearance in judgment be when he comes to condemn all the disobedient? No wonder it is said of him when he sits on the great white throne of judgment, "From whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." (Rev. 20: 11.)

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you get from the daily Bible readings?
What is the aim of this quarter?
How does it compare with the aim of the last quarter?

What do you know of Mount Sinai?
Tell some of the experiences of the people between Goshen and Sinai.
What advice did Moses get concerning organization?
From whom did he get it?
What is the date of this lesson?
How long since the people had left Egypt?
Discuss the Golden Text.
What general proposition did God have Moses to put to the people?
What was the people's answer?
How did God veil his presence when he appeared to the people?
How did the people sanctify themselves for this appearance?
How could the people touch the mountain? What was the penalty?
In what way were bounds set for the people?
What is meant by the people being allowed to come to the mount?
What lessons do you get from the fact that Moses was mediator between God and the people?

Lesson II—April 11, 1948

THE LAW GIVEN THROUGH MOSES

The Lesson Text

Ex. 19: 16-25

16 And it came to pass on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud; and all the people that were in the camp trembled.
17 And Mō'sēs brought forth the people out of the camp to meet God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.
18 And mount Sī'nāi, the whole of it, smoked, because Jē-hō'văh descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.
19 And when the voice of the trumpet waxed louder and louder, Mō'sēs spake, and God answered him by a voice.
20 And Jē-hō'văh came down upon mount Sī'nāi, to the top of the mount: and Jē-hō'văh called Mō'sēs to the top of the mount; and Mō'sēs went up.
21 And Jē-hō'văh said unto Mō'sēs, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto Jē-hō'văh to gaze, and many of them perish.
22 And let the priests also, that come near to Jē-hō'văh, sanctify themselves, lest Jē-hō'văh break forth upon them.
23 And Mō'sēs said unto Jē-hō'văh, The people cannot come up to mount Sī'nāi: for thou didst charge us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it.
24 And Jē-hō'văh said unto him, Go, get thee down; and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aăr'ŏn with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto Jē-hō'văh, lest he break forth upon them.
25 So Mō'sēs went down unto the people, and told them.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"The law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ."* (Gal. 3: 24a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Deut. 5: 1-5.

Daily Bible Readings

April 5. M.....The Book of the Law of Moses (Neh. 8: 1-3, 8, 14-18)
April 6. T.....Law Given at Sinai (Neh. 9: 6-20)
April 7. W.....Law Contrasted with Grace (John 1: 10-18)
April 8. T.....Moses Gave the Commandments (Mark 7: 8-23)
April 9. F.....Face of Moses Veiled (2 Cor. 3: 12-18)
April 10. S.....The Law Was A Tutor (Gal. 3: 23-29)
April 11. S.....Children of the Law in Bondage (Gal. 4: 21-31)

Lesson Subject Explained

The term *the law* as used in our Lesson Subject, and as used in the Bible sometimes refers to the Ten Commandments. Jesus used it in this sense when he said to the Jews, "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you doeth the law? Why seek ye to kill me?" (John 7: 19.) They were about to kill, but the law which Moses gave forbade killing. That of course refers to the commandment, Thou shalt not kill. (Ex. 20: 13.) But sometimes the term *the law* included more than simply the Ten Commandments. Our Golden Text, "The law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ," illustrates this fact. Surely no one would say that the term law here includes nothing more than the Ten commandments. In fact this expression is used by inspired writers to refer to statements in all five of the books of the Pentateuch. In 1 Cor. 14: 34 Paul said for women to be in subjection "as also saith the law." This is admitted to refer to Gen. 3: 16. Again in Rom. 7: 7 Paul said, "I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." This we find in Ex. 20: 17. Next, a man asked Jesus, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus replied, "Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart." This is found in Deut. 6: 5 and Lev. 19: 18. Last, Jesus asked the Jews, "Have ye not read in the law, that on the sabbath day the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are guiltless? (Matt. 12: 5.) This is found in Num. 28: 9. So we learn that the expression *the law* refers to the writings of Moses. Jesus so used the term when he said, "All things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me." (Luke 24: 44.) Here the Old Testament is divided into three parts, and *the law of Moses* is one part, including the five books written by Moses.

Again the expression *the law* is a general term used to include moral, civil, and ceremonial enactments. In Luke 2: 27 it is said that the parents of Jesus brought him to the temple that they might do concerning him after the custom of the law. Here they offered a pair of turtledoves. This was a ceremonial act, yet it was required by *the law*. Next, Jesus said the great commandment of *the law* is to love God with all our hearts. This is neither civil nor ceremonial, it is a moral requirement; but it is of *the law*. Again, Paul said. "Sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" (Acts 23: 3.) Here he referred to a civil enactment of the law.

Those who worship on the seventh day because they think the fourth commandment is still binding say that the ceremonial law was given through Moses, but that the moral law, which is only the Ten Commandments, came from God and not through Moses. This is incorrect as is evident from scriptures already cited. Jesus said, "Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother." (Mark 7: 10.) And Jesus said Moses gave the law which forbade killing. (John 7: 19.) And it is said Moses gave the law (John 1: 17); we are told Moses gave the book of the law of Jehovah (2 Chron. 34: 14;) and last, we are told that Moses gave God's law. (Neh. 10: 29.) All the law, by whatever name it is called, which was binding on the Jews from Sinai to Pentecost, was given through Moses. The New Testament teaches clearly that the law given through Moses was taken away (2 Cor. 3; Gal. 3; Heb. 8), so the effort is made to show that only

ceremonial law came through Moses. If the Ten Commandments came through Moses, it follows that they have been done away, and therefore the commandment to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy is gone. But from the passages given above we see that all law—civil, ceremonial, and moral—binding on the Jews came through Moses, and that it has been taken away.

Context of the Lesson

Since this lesson follows immediately the lesson of last week, both Lesson Texts being in the same chapter, the lesson of last week is the context of this lesson. So a short review of last week's lesson is all that is needed for a study of the context of this lesson.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date for this lesson is 1491 B.C.
PLACE.—Mount Sinai.
PERSONS.—Jehovah, Moses, Aaron, and the children of Israel.

Golden Text Explained

The law is become our tutor. The expression *the law* in this text has the meaning so generally given it in the New Testament, that of all the rules and regulations which were binding on the Jews from Sinai to Pentecost. It includes all the civil, ceremonial, and moral laws which were given through Moses. This is the law which Paul says was given four hundred and thirty years after the promise was made to Abraham. (Gal. 3: 17.) He also says in this same connection that the inheritance is not of the law, but of the promise. That the law was simply added to the promise on account of the transgressions of the people, and that it was intended to be in force only until the seed should come to whom the promise was made. And in this same connection Paul says if the law had been given which could make alive, righteousness would have been by the law, so we conclude that the law given through Moses could not make alive, and that righteousness was not obtained through the law. The Jews made the mistake of thinking they could be justified through the law, hence they clung to the law and rejected Christ. They failed to realize the purpose of the law as stated in our Golden Text.

The word *tutor* in our text is the translation of a Greek word from which we get our word *pedagogue*. For this reason the King James version has the word *schoolmaster*. But the word *pedagogue* in the Greek meant the leader or escort of children; that is, a slave who was given charge of the child to guide him to school and to the schoolmaster, or teacher. In our text Christ is the teacher, and the law is the escort whose duty it was to bring the Jews to Christ.

To bring us unto Christ. The word *us* in this text includes only those who were under the law. Paul says, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it speaketh to them that are under the law." (Rom. 3: 19.) And since no one but the Jews were under the law, it follows that the law did not say anything to anyone not under the law, that is, no one but the Jews. But the law was a *tutor* only as it taught. The law taught by speaking, therefore it taught none but those under the law, the Jews. And the law brought unto Christ only those whom it taught. So the law was given to be a tutor to bring

the Jews to Christ. The law brought the Jews to Christ in that it made them realize the necessity of a perfect sacrifice. They offered animals which could not take away sins, so had to be offered continually, day after day, month after month, and year after year. But these offerings were types of, and pointed forward to, a better sacrifice which should put an end to all such imperfect sacrifices.

Again, the law brought the Jews unto Christ in that it made them realize how many, and how exceedingly sinful, were their sins. Paul said that through the law was the knowledge of sin. (Rom. 7: 7-13.) The law made people conscious of their sins, and of their lost condition without a Saviour from those sins. And since the law pointed out their sins, and demanded perfect obedience to it that they might be justified, the law brought them to Christ for justification by faith instead of perfect obedience to the law. If our eternal salvation depends upon *perfect obedience* to law, whether the law of Moses or the law of Christ, we are hoplessly lost, for none of us are capable of rendering perfect obedience. Perfect obedience means doing all that is our duty to do (which implies perfect knowledge of our duty) from the moment we become Christians without the slightest mistake, or imperfection. This is humanly impossible. But this is what justification by law demands. Hence if we are ever justified it must be by faith in Christ, and not by obedience. This does not excuse us from rendering the best obedience we are capable of rendering, but it does shift the emphasis from obedience to faith as the basis for our hope of eternal salvation. It is faith, made alive by the best obedience we can render, by which we are justified. It was the law that taught the Jews the impossibility of being justified by works, and to hope for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Helps on the Lesson Text

There were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount. These physical manifestations of the presence of God were for the purpose of impressing the people with the greatness, the power, the glory, and the holiness of God. They were prone to go into idolatry and they needed some proof of a divine Being who was not of wood, stone, or incarnated in some animal. "God, therefore, in his indescribable majesty, descended on the mount; and, by the thick dark cloud, the violent thunders, the vivid lightnings, the long and loud blasts of the trumpet, the smoke encompassing the whole mountain, and the excessive earthquake, proclaimed his power, his glory, and his holiness; so that the people, however unfaithful and disobedient afterwards, never once doubted the divine interference, or suspected Moses of any cheat or imposture. Indeed, so absolute and unequivocal were the proofs of supernatural agency, that it was impossible these appearances could be attributed to any cause but the unlimited power of the author of Nature." (Adam Clarke.)

And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet God. It will be remembered that in our lesson last Sunday it was stated that commentators saw difficulty in verses 12 and 13; verse 12 saying that the people were not to go up into the mountain, and verse 13 saying that they might go to the mountain when the trumpet sounded. Here we find the voice of the trumpet waxing louder and louder, yet Moses brings the people to the "nether part of the mount" to meet

God. Their coming *to the mount* at the sounding of the trumpet, and their *going up into the mountain* are two different things.

Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. Sometime during this manifestation of power and majesty Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." (Heb. 12: 21.) A word from God at this time for the comfort and encouragement of Moses may have been the answer of God mentioned in this verse.

Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto Jehovah to gaze. Man has always been inquisitive; man has never made much difference between the things that are holy and the things that are common; he has been daringly inquisitive. This God knew, and wanted the people warned against such daring inquisitiveness. Moses thought the people had been sufficiently warned, but to that God answered, "Go, get thee down." Even Moses was taking liberties with God, opposing his views with the expressed will of God.

And let the priests also, . . . sanctify themselves. Who were these priests? The tribe of Levi had not yet been separated and consecrated to the priesthood, nor had Aaron been appointed as high priest at this time. A little later we read, "And he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto Jehovah." (Ex. 24: 5.) From these statements we gather that the Israelites had been offering sacrifices to God, and that certain men had the duty of offering the sacrifices. And when the Levites were selected to do this work, some time after the law was given, these people gave up their duties and positions. The people had sanctified themselves already; why had not the priests done so? Was it because they felt no need of it since they were priests? That seems to be the human explanation of the matter.

Let not the priests and the people break through. It would be human to break through and go right into the thick cloud to get a closer view of God. But to do so would mean instant destruction, hence the double warning. And the priests are given special mention. It would be easy for the priests to see why the common people would not be allowed to go into the mountain, but it might be difficult for them to see why they should not be allowed to go at least as far as Moses went. Position sometimes exalts men and makes them forget that they are dust.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

The unusual events which happened when Jehovah came down upon Mount Sinai may be used to impress these children with the power and majesty of God. Call attention to each of the things which manifested the presence of God. Thunders louder than any one had ever heard before, lightnings brighter than they had ever seen, a trumpet sounding louder than they had ever heard, the mountain was smoking like a furnace, and it was trembling, or quaking, greatly. Compare these things with things similar within the knowledge of the children, but multiplied many times beyond things they have seen and heard. With all these things going at the same time on a mountain in a desert, would they not be impressed with the idea that something supernatural was taking place? It was God's purpose to impress the children of Israel with that very idea.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Here we have a record of things unusual happening. This record is either true or false. If it is false we may as well throw away the book. If it is true, God came down on Mount Sinai and gave the law to Moses. There is no middle ground to take with reference to the miracles of the Bible; there is no way to explain them as coincidental occurrences of nature. It will not do to say that Moses took advantage of a gathering storm to go up into the mountain. He told them three days before to get ready for this very thing. Could Moses predict the storm three days in advance? The mountain trembled greatly. This cannot be explained by saying that there was an earthquake at the exact hour of an electrical storm. So we may use this lesson to impress these departments with the miraculous in the Bible.

Young People and Adult Departments

It will be well for these departments to spend much of their time studying the lessons suggested in the first section of this lesson. The law, the law of Moses, and the law of God, are expressions which refer to the same thing, and in their general use they include all the rules and regulations which governed the Jews for fifteen hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ. People who worship on the seventh day try to make a distinction between the law of Moses and the law of God, claiming that the law of Moses was wholly ceremonial and that it was taken out of our way. (Col. 2: 14.) But they say the law of God, the Ten Commandments, are the moral law, and that it is still binding on us, and therefore we ought to remember the Sabbath to keep it holy. We will have a lesson on the Sabbath day in this quarter, but it will be necessary for us to get these lessons on the law clearly in our minds to understand why the old Sabbath law is not binding. None of the Ten Commandments, as such, are binding on us. Moses has no authority; his commission has expired. Jesus Christ has all authority. We obey what he commands. We refrain from killing because he said do so, not because Moses commanded it. If Jesus commands us to keep the Sabbath we will do it, but no one can cite the passage where Jesus issued such a command. Through his apostles he teaches us to worship on the first of the week. (Acts 20: 7; 1 Cor. 16: 1, 2; Heb. 10: 25.)

Topics for Discussion

1. Contrast the physical settings of the giving of the law and the first announcement of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thunder, lightning, smoke, mountain trembling and people warned not to come too near when the law was given; but the Holy Spirit descends with only sufficient sound to attract the attention of the people in the city, and tongues like as of fire sitting on each of the apostles to point out those empowered to speak for God when the gospel was first preached. The law was a ministration of death (2 Cor. 3: 7,) but the gospel was a ministration of righteousness, of life.

2. God did not respect position in the person of the priests, for they had to sanctify themselves the same as the people for the coming of God. This may suggest that those who hold positions of power and influence in the church today are required to keep themselves clean and sanctify themselves wholly to God's service, and that their

position gives them no favors not enjoyed by the humblest and most unnoticed person in the church.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you learn from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
How much does the expression *the law* include?
How can you prove there is no difference between the law of Moses and the law of God?
What three natural divisions of the law should we recognize?
Is the expression *law of God* ever used with reference to ceremonial duties?
Where is Moses given credit for giving the Ten Commandments?
How would you proceed to show that the Sabbath law given by Moses is not now binding?
What can you say of the context of this lesson?
What is the meaning of the word *tutor*?
What does Paul say about the law and the promise made to Abraham?
Who was to be brought to Christ by the law?
How did the law serve to bring the Jews to Christ?
Why can people not be justified by obedience to law?
By what are we justified today?
What was the purpose of the physical phenomena on Sinai?
How was Moses affected by the scenes on Sinai?
Why the second charge to keep the people from breaking through?
Why the command at this time for the priests to sanctify themselves?
Why the special warning to the priests not to break through?

Lesson III—April 18, 1948

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The Lesson Text

Ex. 20: 1-17

1 And God spake all these words, saying,
2 I am Jē-hō'văh thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Ē'ğŷpt, out of the house of bondage.
3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
4 Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness *of any thing* that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:
5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for I Jē-hō'văh thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me,
6 And showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.
7 Thou shalt not take the name of Jē-hō'văh thy God in vain; for Jē-hō'văh will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
9 Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work;
10 But the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jē-hō'văh thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:
11 For in six days Jē-hō'văh made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Jē-hō'văh blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.
12 Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jē-hō'văh thy God giveth thee.

13 Thou shalt not kill.
14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.
15 Thou shalt not steal.
16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments."* (Ex. 34: 28b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Deut. 5: 22-27.

Daily Bible Readings

April 12. M.....The Words of the Covenant (Ex. 34: 27-35)
April 13. T.....Covenant on Tables of Stone (Deut. 4: 9-14)
April 14. W.....Covenant Made with Israel (Deut. 5: 1-21)
April 15. T.....Written with the Finger of God (Deut. 9: 6-21)
April 16. F.....Tables of Stone in the Ark (1 Kings 8: 5-11)
April 17. S.....Old Covenant Imperfect (Heb. 8: 1-13)
April 18. S.....Old Covenant Type of Better Things (Heb. 9: 1-10)

Lesson Subject Explained

By some the Ten Commandments are regarded as the moral law, and as being binding forever. Those who hold such position usually claim that the Ten Commandments include all the moral principles binding upon the people. But such is not true. There are many things that have to do with moral principles which are not included in them. (1) Traffic in human beings is not mentioned in the commandments, but is forbidden in Ex. 21: 16. (2) Hurting a woman with child is not included in the commandments, but is in Ex. 21: 22. (3) Sorcery is given the death penalty in Ex. 22: 18. (4) Wresting justice in Ex. 23: 6. (5) The taking of bribes is forbidden in Ex. 23: 8. (6) Human abomination is forbidden in Lev. 18: 22. (7) Confusion is forbidden in Lev. 18: 23; Ex. 21: 19. (8) Cursing the deaf and blind disallowed in Lev. 19: 14. (9) Attitudes toward brethren are commanded in Lev. 19: 17, 18 which are not included in the Ten Commandments. (10) Cursing and blasphemy, other than taking the name of the Lord in vain, are given the death penalty in Lev. 24: 13-16. (11) Assault short of murder is not included in the Ten Commandments, but is treated in Lev. 24: 19.

The two greatest commandments of the law are not a part of the Ten Commandments. Jesus said to love God with the whole heart is the greatest commandment, and to love your neighbor as yourself is the second greatest commandment of the law. (Matt. 22: 37-39.) These are not found in the Ten Commandments, but are found in Deut. 6: 5 and Lev. 19: 18. The Ten Commandments served somewhat as a constitution, and all the rules and regulations were based upon them and derived their constitutionality from them. Our lawmaking bodies pass almost innumerable laws in the regulation of the activities of the individuals and corporations of this nation. But if any of these laws are found to be contrary to the constitution, the law is declared void, not binding. So the Ten Commandments were the basic law of the new nation of Israel formed of the tribes of the children of Abraham and Jacob. All the rules, laws, or regulations, whether moral, civil, or ceremonial, were in harmony with these basic laws.

The Ten Commandments naturally divide themselves into two sections. First, those which deal with our duty to God. This division

consists of the first four commandments. Second, those which deal with our duty to our fellow man. There are six commandments in this division. Those who loved God would obey the first four commandments, and those who loved their fellow man would obey the six commandments of the last division. For this reason it is said that love is the fulfilling of the law. That was true under the law of Moses, and it is true under the law of Christ. If a person loves God today, he will do what God commands; and if one loves his fellow man he will treat that fellow man like God directs him to be treated.

Context of the Lesson

Since this lesson follows immediately the Lesson Text of last Sunday's lesson a review of the last lesson will be all that is needed as a study of the context.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date for this lesson is 1491 B.C.

PLACE.—Mount Sinai.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Moses, Aaron, and the children of Israel.

Golden Text Explained

And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant. The reader will keep in mind the fact that the first tables had been broken (Ex. 32: 19,) and that this was the second writing of the commandments. It has frequently been said that God wrote the first set and that Moses wrote the second, and for that idea there is some ground; yet from a study of all the passages bearing on the point it seems clear that God wrote on the stones both times. Moses was told, with reference to the first tables, to come up into the mount and get the tables of stone, and the law and the commandments "which I have written." (Ex. 24: 12.) Again it is said they were "written with the finger of God." (Ex. 31: 18.) Again, "And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables." (Ex. 32: 16.) This settles the matter concerning the first tables.

With reference to the second tables, we have this statement, "And Jehovah said unto Moses, Write thou these words. . . . And he wrote upon the tables." (Ex. 34: 27, 28.) This looks as if Moses did the writing. But when we read an account of these matters given by Moses some time later in chapters 9 and 10 of Deuteronomy, we get a different view. After telling about getting the first tables "written with the finger of God," and breaking them when he saw how they had sinned, he said, "At that time Jehovah said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like the first. . . . And I will write on the tables the words that were on the first tables. . . . So I made an ark. . . . And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments." (Deut. 10: 1-4.) And going back to Ex. 34: 1 where God gave instructions for writing the second copy we find this, "And Jehovah said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon the tables the words that were on the first tables." (Ex. 34: 1.) From these verses we learn that God did the actual writing on the second tables. The word *he* in our text, therefore, must refer to God, and not to Moses. This

is also the conclusion of a standard work. "We must therefore regard 'he' in this present passage as meaning 'the Lord,' which is quite possible according to the Hebrew idiom." (*Pulpit Commentary.*)

But this still leaves us to deal with this statement, "Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and Israel." (Ex. 34: 27.) Here Jehovah told Moses to write. The best solution of this seems to be the one given by Adam Clarke, that God wrote on the tables of stone, but told Moses to write copies to give to the people. The copy which God made was put in the ark (Deut. 10: 5,) and the people would not have access to that; hence the necessity for making copies to distribute among the leaders and teachers of the people.

The words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments. In a number of places we are told that the Ten Commandments are the words of the covenant, that they are the covenant, God made with the people. (Deut. 4: 13; 9: 9-11.) That this is the covenant God made with them when he took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt none will deny. But Jeremiah said the people continued not in that covenant God made with them in that day he led them out of Egypt, and promised that he would take away that covenant and make another. (Jer. 31: 31-38.) And Paul quoted that phophecy and said it was fulfilled when Christ took away the first covenant and established the second. (Heb. 8: 7-13; 10: 9.) So the Ten Commandment covenant, or the covenant of which the Ten Commandments were the words, has been taken away, and a new and better covenant between God and his people has been made.

Helps on the Lesson Text

Parties to the Covenant (Verses 1, 2).

There must be at least two parties to a covenant. The parties of this covenant are set forth in the first statement of it. *I am Jehovah thy God.* This is the first party. *Thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.* The people who had been in bondage in Egypt, but had been delivered by Jehovah, were the second party of this covenant. This is made even clearer by Moses, "Jehovah our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. Jehovah made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." (Deut. 5: 2, 3.) And then he reminds them how God spoke with them in the mount from the midst of fire, and reminds them of what God said to them by giving the second statement of the Ten Commandments. So Jehovah was the first party, and the Jews the second party to the covenant made at Sinai; and the Ten Commandments were the words of that covenant.

Duties of the People Toward God (Verses 3-11).

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. The word *thou* is singular number. "The form indicated that each individual of the nation was addressed severally, and was required himself to obey the law, a mere general national obedience being insufficient." "This commandment prohibits every species of mental idolatry, and all inordinate attachment to earthly and sensible things." They were told that the polytheism which they saw in Egypt would not be tolerated.

Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image. The first commandment forbids mental idolatry; the second forbids external idolatry; the first forbids one to give affection of the heart to any

other, and the second forbids the outward show of love by bowing down to images. The Catholic Church has omitted this commandment, but to retain the number ten they have made two commandments out of the last one. This is one of the boldest pieces of mutilation of the word of God ever attempted.

Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them. Does this second commandment forbid sculpture and painting? Is there a sin in painting, or chiseling in stone, the likeness of a bird or an animal? Evidently there is no sin in such unless it be done for the purpose of bowing down before them to worship. There are those who say they do not worship the image, but the image is used to help them worship God. But this verse still forbids bowing down before images when one is worshiping.

Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain. "This precept not only forbids all false oaths, but all common swearing where the name of God is used, or where he is appealed to as a witness of the truth." Using the name of God lightly and irreverently in common conversation is a sign of a lack of respect for his holiness. There are many "bywords" in use now which are corrupted forms of God's name; they have been corrupted because of a hesitancy for using the actual name of God. These are out of place in the speech of Christians. (Eph. 4: 29; 5: 3, 4.)

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. The word *sabbath* means *rest.* God rested on the seventh day, so it was fitting that the seventh day should be given to the Jews as a day of rest. The Sabbath was given for a sign between God and the Israelites. (Ex. 31: 12-17; Ezek. 20: 12, 20.) It was never given to Gentiles for a day of rest, but was strictly Jewish, a sign between God and the Jews, that they might know it was Jehovah who sanctified them. Verses 9 through 11 tells how they were to keep the day holy, and Ex. 31: 14 reveals the penalty for failing to keep the day holy. Num. 15: 32-36 gives an example of punishment.

Duties Toward Their Fellow Man (Verses 12-17).

Honor thy father and thy mother. To honor parents includes two things. (1) Obedience to parents. (Eph. 6: 1-3.) (2) To honor parents one must care for them and respect them in their old age. (Matt. 15: 4-6; Mark 7: 10-13.) In this connection parents have the duty to see to it that their children show proper respect for them as long as they are under their care and instruction. Parents who neglect this disobey the Lord, and encourage their children to disobedience.

Thou shalt not kill. The word *kill* is to be taken in the sense of murder, for in many passages we find God giving instructions to his people to kill their enemies, and even a son who refused to obey his parents. (Deut. 21: 18-21.) Samuel killed Agag (1 Sam. 15: 33), but did not disobey this commandment. Some try to make a distinction here, saying that this command applies to individuals, but not the government; but no such distinction can be made. It is just as wrong for a government to murder as it is for an individual to do so. In fact a government cannot do anything except as individuals holding government positions do those things.

Thou shalt not commit adultery. Though the word *adultery* has a specific meaning, it undoubtedly is to be given a wider application here, to include all forms of illicit intercourse. Jesus added two rules

governing this sin, and makes it possible for men to be guilty of adultery in two ways beside that intended here. (1) To divorce for trivial cause and marry again, or to marry one divorced for trivial cause. (Matt. 19: 9.) (2) To look upon one of the opposite sex with lust in the heart is to commit adultery with that one. (Matt. 27, 28.)

Thou shalt not steal. This teaches us proper respect for the property of others. But one does not have to take things under cover of darkness to be guilty of stealing. To use unbalanced scales, to charge a customer twice for one item among many he buys, or to "shortchange" a customer is to steal from him. Read Ex. 22 for the penalty for stealing.

Thou shalt not bear false witness. This forbids false statements in court to the hurt of a man with reference to his life, property, or character. It also forbids loose talk, talebearing, slander, gossip, and idle talk where it involves the reputation of another. In Athens a false witness was fined heavily, but in Egypt his nose and ears were cut off. This latter should have been an effective restraint on loose talk about others.

Thou shalt not covet. The act of coveting takes place in the heart. No other law in the time of Moses attempted to regulate the heart; they dealt only with the deed. But Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, wanted his people to know that he could read their hearts, and he wished to prevent the deeds by directing the heart into the right thoughts. Covetousness is an unlawful desire. It is desiring something for which you are not willing to give a lawful exchange, or for which there is no lawful exchange. God forbids coveting another's wife, and for her there is no lawful exchange. On account of covetousness being in the heart, it is one of the most dangerous sins to which we are liable. I am restrained from stealing because others will see me and have a bad opinion of me; I am restrained from bearing false witness over the community because it may work to my hurt. But one can be covetous without it being so easily and quickly detected by others. So we have not the force of public opinion to restrain us in this matter. We ought therefore to examine ourselves prayerfully to see if we are guilty of the sin, even in the slightest degree, and rid ourselves of it before it gets a strong hold upon our hearts.

Helps for Teachers

For the lack of space in this lesson the only suggestion the writer cares to make is to see that every student who can possibly do so memorizes these Ten Commandments. In the children's departments it will be good to write them on the blackboard until all have become familiar with them. Have them repeat them in unison several times, as that will help those who have not memorized them well. Then have each one to say them, as time will permit.

In the adult classes it will be well to write a word or two of each to suggest the commandment, and then opposite that place a New Testament reference to show what is taught by our Lord on that subject. You will find a reference for nine of them, the Sabbath not being taught by him.

Those who maintain that the Ten Commandments as such, and given through Moses, are binding today make the argument that if these are not binding there is no law against the things forbidden in

the Ten Commandments. Placing New Testament references on the board, and showing the teaching of Christ on these subjects will overcome such objections.

Topics for Discussion

1. Those who make and use graven images in their worship not only bring the wrath of God upon themselves, but upon their children for several generations. God is jealous when the love which belongs to him is given to, or shared with, the form of something and made by man's hands. "His almighty hand comes down with a blow the afflictive energies of which cannot be exhausted in one or even two generations."

2. While God visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the third and fourth generations, not in guilt but in consequences, his mercy and goodness triumph in that his lovingkindness is shown to a thousand generations.

3. By reading carefully verses 4 and 5 of our text you will see that those who make and bow down to images are classed as those who hate God. The object of man's worship enjoys man's supreme affections. To love something more than we love God is to hate God. The word hate is so used in the sense of love less in Gen. 29: 30, 31, and Luke 14: 26.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you get from the daily Bible readings?
Name some moral principles not included in the Ten Commandments.
What did Jesus say were the greatest commandments?
How are the Ten Commandments related to these two great commandments?
Into what two divisons do the Ten Commandments naturally divide?
Who wrote the commandments on the first tables of stone?
Can you prove that God wrote them on the second tables?
What writing did God command Moses to do?
Can you show that the Ten Commandments are the old covenant which passed away?
Who were the parties to this Ten Commandment covenant?
In what ways and forms was idolatry forbidden?
What does the Catholic Church do with the second commandment?
Can one use an image as a help to worship God?
In what ways may we take the name of God in vain?
What do you know about keeping the Sabbath day holy?
In what two ways are parents to be honored?
What duty do parents have in this matter?
In what ways may we be guilty of murder?
In what ways may we be guilty of stealing?
How can people be guilty of bearing false witness?
What is covetousness? Why is it so dangerous?

Lesson IV—April 25, 1948

LAWS OF THE TABERNACLE WORSHIP

The Lesson Text

Ex. 40: 17-33

17 And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up.
18 And Mō'sĕs reared up the tabernacle, and laid its sockets, and set up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up its pillars.
19 And he spread the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it; as Jĕ-hō'văh commanded Mō'sĕs.
20 And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy-seat above upon the ark:
21 And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the veil of the screen, and screened the ark of the testimony; as Jĕ-hō'văh commanded Mō'sĕs.
22 And he put the table in the tent of meeting, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the veil.
23 And he set the bread in order upon it before Jĕ-hō'văh; as Jĕ-hō'văh commanded Mō'sĕs.
24 And he put the candlestick in the tent of meeting, over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward.
25 And he lighted the lamps before Jĕ-hō'văh; as Jĕ-hō'văh commanded Mō'sĕs.
26 And he put the golden altar in the tent of meeting before the veil:
27 And he burnt thereon incense of sweet spices; as Jĕ-hō'văh commanded Mō'sĕs.
28 And he put the screen of the door to the tabernacle.
29 And he set the altar of burnt-offering at the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered upon it the burnt-offering and the meal-offering; as Jĕ-hō'văh commanded Mō'sĕs.
30 And he set the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water therein, wherewith to wash.
31 And Mō'sĕs and Aär'ŏn and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat;
32 When they went into the tent of meeting, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as Jĕ-hō'văh commanded Mō'sĕs.
33 And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the screen of the gate of the court. So Mō'sĕs finished the work.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."* (Luke 4: 8b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ex. 40: 34-38.

Daily Bible Readings

April 19. M.....Gifts for the Tabernacle (Ex. 35: 4-6, 20-29)
April 20. T.....Labor for the Tabernacle (Ex. 35: 10-19, 30-35)
April 21. W.....Curtains for the Tabernacle (Ex. 36: 2-19)
April 22. T.....Ark of Covenant and Table of Showbread (Ex. 37: 1-16)
April 23. F.....Candlestick and Altar of Incense (Ex. 37: 17-29)
April 24. S.....Altar of Burnt Offerings and Laver (Ex. 38: 1-8)
April 25. S.....Court About the Tabernacle (Ex. 38: 9-20)

Lesson Subject Explained

The purpose of the tabernacle is expressed by Jehovah himself. "And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." (Ex. 25: 8.) And, "I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am Jehovah their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them: I am Jehovah their God." (Ex. 29: 45, 46.) It was God's dwelling place. His presence filled the tabernacle; there he spoke to them; and there he accepted their offerings and heard their

prayers accompanied by the incense from off the altar in the holy place.

The tabernacle was made according to a pattern shown Moses in the mount. "According to all that I show thee, the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the furniture thereof, even so shall ye make it." (Ex. 25: 9.) Stephen speaks of this, "Our fathers had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, even as he appointed who spake unto Moses, that he should make it according to the figure that he had seen." (Acts 7: 44.) And Paul had this to say, "Even as Moses is warned of God when he is about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was showed thee in the mount." (Heb. 8: 5b.)

Unbelievers have argued that Moses made the tabernacle after the pattern of such as he had seen among the nations of that day. A statement from T. H. Horne will be in place here. "It has been imagined that this tabernacle, together with all the furniture and appurtenances, was of Egyptian origin; that Moses projected it after the fashion of some such structure which he had observed in Egypt, and which was in use among other nations; or that God directed it to be made with a view of indulging the Israelites in a compliance with their customs and modes of worship, so far as there was nothing in them directly sinful. The heathen nations, it is true, had such tabernacles or portable shrines as are alluded to by the prophet Amos (verse 26,) which might bear a great resemblance to that of the Jews; but it has neither been proved, nor is it probable, that they had them *before* the Jews, and that the Almighty so far condescended to indulge the Israelites, a wayward people, and prone to idolatry, as to introduce them into his worship. It is far more likely that the heathens derived their tabernacles from that of the Jews, who had the whole of their religion immediately from God, than that the Jews, or rather that God, should take them from the heathens." (*Introduction to the Scriptures*, Vol. III, p. 232.) And Adam Clarke argues at length to show that the heathens actually did borrow the idea for their tabernacles from the Jews. (See at the end of comments on Exodus 25.)

Context of the Lesson

Beginning in Exodus 25 we have a description of the pattern shown Moses in the mount for the making of the tabernacle and all the furniture to be made and used in the worship of Jehovah. Following that we are told who shall fill the office of the priest, and something of his duties, and the dress he shall wear is described in detail. The manner of consecration is given, the daily offerings, the making and burning of incense described with such detail that there can be no mistake, and instructions are given concerning the Sabbath. While all these things were being revealed to Moses, the people had seemingly given up hope of his return to them; he had been gone forty days. As Moses returned he heard them shouting and singing, found they had made a golden calf and were worshiping it. This is the time when he threw down the tables of stone and broke them. Moses interceded for the people, and, though God forgave, he for a time refused to accompany the people in their journey. (Ex. 33: 1-4.) But upon the further pleading of Moses Jehovah agreed to go with them. (Ex. 33: 14-16.) Then Moses went back into

Sinai and stayed another forty days and nights while God wrote the Ten Commandments again on other tables of stone. Following these matters detailed instructions are given for the making and erection of the tabernacle and its furniture.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date of this lesson is 1490 B.C. It is said to be on the first day of the first month of the second year of their wilderness wanderings. (Ex. 40: 1, 17.)

PLACE.—Sinai.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Moses, and the children of Israel.

Golden Text Explained

Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God. This is the language of Jesus when he was being tempted by Satan in the wilderness immediately after his baptism. Satan was offering Jesus all the authority which he then exercised over the people of the world, if only Jesus would worship him. Satan is the god of this world (2 Cor. 4: 4), and the prince of the powers of the air. (Eph. 2: 2.) He was offering to give Jesus the second place in his kingdom. Some have thought Satan was offering Jesus something he could not deliver. In Matthew's record it is said that Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and offered to give them. But in Luke's record we learn that it is the authority Satan exercised over the kingdoms of the world that he offered. If he was offering Jesus something he could not deliver, Jesus was wise enough to know it, and consequently there would have been no temptation to it.

Jesus quoted Deut. 6: 13 in reply, and his quotation differs a little from our translation. "Thou shalt fear Jehovah thy God; and him shalt thou serve, and shalt swear by his name." Jesus quoted from the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew. The word *only* is not in our version, but is in the Septuagint, as well as several other reliable versions. It makes the statement much stronger, and was likely in the original. "Him *only* shalt thou serve." They might have served Jehovah and other gods too; but when the word *only* is put into the command, all other gods are excluded.

All acceptable worship is a matter of revelation. The world through its wisdom has never been able to invent a system of worship acceptable to God. Systems of worship invented by man have all had a tendency from God toward idolatry and polytheism. Athens is a very good sample of the end towards which man's system of worship tends. (Acts 17.) Such a tendency is noticeable in the very earliest history of man. Cain substituted his way for what God had commanded. And the Jews were continually going away from the worship of Jehovah to that of the heathen gods of the nations round about them. And there is another thing to be observed in this connection. Cain stooped to murder only after he had departed from the true worship of God. When the Jews maintained a true worship, the moral plane on which they lived was high; but when they drifted into idolatry their moral standards were lower. This may be observed among people today. The purer the worship, the higher the standards of morals among the people.

Since true worship is a matter of revelation, we must be guided in what we do as acts of worship by that which is written. Paul warns us not to go beyond that which is written. (1 Cor. 4: 6.) John teaches us that if we go beyond the teaching of Christ, which is written in the gospel, we have not God. (2 John 9.) Paul tells us we may have God on the condition we do the things we learned from him by way of teaching and example. (Phil. 4: 9.) Again, he says whatever we do in word or deed, we must do it in the name of Jesus Christ. (Col. 3: 17.) To do a thing "in the name of Christ," is to do it by the authority of Christ. How does Christ authorize us to do a thing in worship? Only by revealing it through an inspired writer. Therefore, only those things written in the gospel are authorized. The burning of incense, the playing of instruments of music in worship, and a number of other such things are not written, commanded, in the teaching of Christ. Hence we have no authority to do them, and we forfeit the fellowship and communion of God if we do them. In doing things without the authority of Christ, we set up ourselves as an authority. This is nothing less than anarchy in the kingdom of God; it is rebellion against the authority of the Great King, and surely none can hope for salvation in heaven who join the devil in his rebellion against God and his Christ. Surely few religious people who indulge in such unauthorized acts of worship realize what a fearful thing they are doing.

Helps on the Lesson Text

And Moses reared up the tabernacle. Space does not allow a detailed description of this tabernacle, but a good short explanation is taken from Maclear. "Its dimensions inside were 30 cubits in length, 10 in breadth, and 10 in height. It was formed of planks of acacia-wood overlaid with gold, fixed into the ground by means of two tenons, each fitting into a socket of silver, resembling the sharp end of a spear. At the top they were united by bars of acacia-wood, 5 bars to each piece, passing through golden rings."

And he spread the tent over the tabernacle. This tent seems to have been the only top there was, or covering, for the holy place and most holy place. Maclear continues, "The roof was formed of several sets of curtains; the innermost, 10 in number, formed of fine twined linen of various colors, and adorned with cherubic figures of curious workmanship; next to these were 11 curtains of goats' hair; then one of rams' skins with the wool on, dyed red; and lastly, another of badgers', or, more probably, seals' skins."

He took and put the testimony into the ark. The *testimony* was that which was written on the two tables of stone. (Deut. 10: 5.) When this was done the ark was placed inside the small compartment of the tabernacle, known as the holy of holies, which was a cube measuring 10 cubits, or 15 feet each way.

And he set up the veil of the screen. This is the veil between the holy place and the most holy place. It was the veil at this place in the temple in Jerusalem which was rent from top to bottom when Jesus died. (Matt. 27: 51.)

And he put the table in the tent of meeting. This table was placed on the right, or north side, half way between the door and veil. On it were placed twelve fresh loaves of showbread each Saturday morning, the old bread being eaten by the priests when taken outside the

holy place. This was the holy bread David ate, and to which Jesus referred. (Matt. 12: 3; 1 Sam. 21: 3-6.) The expression *tent of meeting* refers to the holy place, for this was where God proposed to dwell and meet his people, to counsel and discipline them. (Num. 12: 4; 16: 19; Deut. 31: 14.)

He puts the candlestick in the tent of meeting. This was a lampstand on which were seven lights, three on each side and one in the middle. It was on the south side of the holy place directly across from the table of showbread. This furnished all the light there was in the holy place, and it was to be cared for morning and evening; the wicks were to be trimmed and the oil replaced.

And he put the golden altar in the tent. This was the altar on which incense was burnt both morning and evening with coals of fire taken from the large altar outside. It seems from Heb. 9: 4 that occasionally this ark was taken into the most holy place, but the times and purposes are not known.

The holy place is made by inspired writers to be a type of the church. The table of showbread is a type of the Lord's supper; the candlestick, a type of the Bible which furnishes us the spiritual light we have; and the altar of incense, a type of our prayers. Many good lessons may be drawn from these types.

He put the screen of the door. This was the door to the front, or east, end of the tabernacle. Its description is found in Ex. 36: 37, 38.

He set the altar of burnt-offerings at the door of the tabernacle. This was outside the holy place, between it and the entrance to the large court which enclosed the tabernacle. It was 5 cubits square and 3 cubits high. There all sacrifices were offered and burnt. From it the priests got fire to burn incense. This is the altar of which Paul said the priests were partakers. (1 Cor. 9: 13.)

He set the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar. Of this laver we know neither the size nor the shape. It was large enough to hold sufficent water to wash the sacrifices, and for the priests to wash their hands and feet, and it seems the whole body was washed in the service of consecration. (Ex. 29: 4; Lev. 8: 6.) No priest was to go into the holy place to perform any service until he had washed at this laver. This is a type of baptism. As the priest was washed here before he could perform his service in the holy place, so we are washed in baptism before we can go into the church to worship God.

And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle. This was a rectangle 100 cubits long and 50 cubits wide; the walls were made of fine linen 5 cubits high, "hanging from pillars of wood wtih capitals overlaid with silver and furnished with sockets of brass."

As Jehovah commanded Moses. This phrase is used seven times in our Lesson Text. The pattern was shown Moses in the mount, and instructions given him; he was warned to make all things according to the pattern. Here we have the record of Moses building according to the pattern, and when each separate piece of furniture is placed, or a court is built, it is said that it was done *as Jehovah commanded Moses.* If all the worship and service rendered today were done as Jehovah commanded, we would have that Christian unity for which Jesus prayed, and such peace and harmony as could be exceeded only

when our knowledge is perfected in the presence of God where we shall offer perfected praise forever.

Helps for Teachers

Once again space forbids departmental suggestions as is our custom. But here is a fine opportunity for sand table or flannel board work in the children's departments. Paper of various colors may be used for the curtains, covers, veil, and screens of the tabernacle, and impressions as to the proportions of the rooms, the pieces of furniture and their locations in the rooms can be made that will last for life.

In the adult departments a good drawing should be made on the blackboard. The dimensions of the court and the tabernacle should be known by each one. The names of each piece of furniture, and something of the shape and size, should be known; and especially should the use of each piece be known, and what it is the type of in the church. The holy place is accepted by all as a type of the church, and the most holy place is accepted as a type of heaven. Paul so used the terms in his letter to the Hebrews. (Heb. 8: 5; 9: 1-10, 23-26; 10: 1-12.) Types may be overworked and made to teach things which were never intended, and even may be made to teach things absolutely untrue. But through a proper use of them they may be made to teach lessons most worth while. They have the force of object lessons which create impressions that last for life. And if this opportunity afforded by this lesson is not used to deepen some of these impressions concerning the church and the worship therein, the teacher will be allowing a great opportunity to pass unused.

Topics for Discussion

1. What became of the tabernacle? During the first part of the conquest of Canaan it was likely moved from place to place, following the army. But even before the death of Joshua it was settled at Shiloh. (Josh. 18: 1; 19: 51.) And it was still in Shiloh in the days of Eli, the priest. (1 Sam. 1: 9.) It was while the tabernacle was here that the ark of the covenant was taken into battle against the Philistines, and was captured. (1 Sam. 4: 9-11.) Later we find the tabernacle, when David was fleeing from Saul, in the city of Nob. (1 Sam. 21: 1-6.) Then shortly before the death of David we read, "For the tabernacle of Jehovah, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt-offering, were at that time in the high place at Gibeon." (1 Chron. 21: 29.) Here the curtain is drawn; we know no more about it.

2. The ark of the covenant lasted longer than the tabernacle. It was captured once by the Philistines, but proved to be more trouble than it was worth to them, so they returned it to Bethshemesh, whence it was taken to Kiriathjearim and stayed there twenty years. (1 Sam. 6: 2.) Then David, on his second attempt, brought it to Jerusalem, where it was put in a tent David had made for it. (2 Sam. 6: 17.) When Solomon built the temple, it was placed in the most holy place. (1 Kings 8: 4, 6.) The last mention of it is made when Josiah commanded that it be placed in its proper place in the temple. (2 Chron. 35: 3.) This was shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson? Discuss it.
What did you learn from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
What was the purpose of the tabernacle?
Where did Moses get his plan for building the tabernacle?
Discuss the context of the lesson.
What is the tendency of man-made worship?
To what are we confined for our direction as to how to worship God?
What were the dimensions of the tabernacle?
What do you know of the covering of the tabernacle?
What was the ark of testimony, its size, and of what built?
What do you know of the veil of the screen?
What do you know of the table of showbread? Its typical meaning?
What do you know of the candlestick, and its typical meaning?
What of the altar of incense, and its typical meaning?
What of the altar of burnt offerings, and its typical meaning?
What of the laver, and its typical meaning?
What do you know of the court about the tabernacle?
How did Moses stress the fact that all things were done right?

Lesson V—May 2, 1948

LAWS GOVERNING THE HIGH PRIEST

The Lesson Text

Lev. 21: 1-15

1 And Jĕ-hō'văh said unto Mō'sĕs, Speak unto the priests, the sons of Aâr'ŏn, and say unto them, There shall none defile himself for the dead among his people;
2 Except for his kin, that is near unto him, for his mother, and for his father, and for his son, and for his daughter, and for his brother,
3 And for his sister a virgin, that is near unto him, that hath had no husband; for her may he defile himself.
4 He shall not defile himself, *being* a chief man among his people, to profane himself.
5 They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard, nor make any cuttings in their flesh.
6 They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God; for the offerings of Jĕ-hō'văh made by fire, the bread of their God, they do offer: therefore they shall be holy.
7 They shall not take a woman that is a harlot, or profane; neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for he is holy unto his God.
8 Thou shalt sanctify him therefore; for he offereth the bread of thy God: he shall be holy unto thee; for I Jĕ-hō'văh, who sanctify you, am holy.
9 And the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the harlot, she profaneth her father: she shall be burnt with fire.
10 And he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil is poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not let the hair of his head go loose, nor rend his clothes;
11 Neither shall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himself for his father, or for his mother;
12 Neither shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God; for the crown of the anointing oil of his God is upon him: I am Jĕ-hō'-văh.
13 And he shall take a wife in her virginity.
14 A widow, or one divorced, or a profane woman, a harlot, these shall he not take: but a virgin of his own people shall he take to wife.
15 And he shall not profane his seed among his people: for I am Jĕ-hō'văh who sanctifieth him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God."* (Lev. 21: 6a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Heb. 5: 1-6.

Daily Bible Readings

April 26. M.....The Ephod for the High Priest (Ex. 28: 1-14)
April 27. T.....The Breastplate for the High Priest (Ex. 28: 15-30)
April 28. W.....Other Garments for the Hight Priest (Ex. 28: 31-43)
April 29. T.....Consecration of the High Priest (Ex. 29: 1-18)
April 30. F.....More About the Consecration (Ex. 29: 19-46)
May 1. S.....The Offering for Aaron (Lev. 9: 1-14)
May 2. S.....The Offering for the People (Lev. 9: 15-24)

Lesson Subject Explained

Aaron was made the first high priest. The office would have gone to Nadab or Abihu upon the death of Aaron, but they were either careless or presumptuous in offering strange fire on the altar, and were devoured by fire from heaven. (Lev. 10: 1-11.) Eleazar was the next in line, so he took the place of Aaron. (Num. 20: 22-29.) The office of the high priest was kept in the family of Eleazar until the time of Eli, when, on account of the wickedness of his sons, the office was given to the family of Ithamar, the younger son of Aaron. (1 Sam. 2: 34-36.) Then in the reign of Solomon, when Abiathar joined Adonijah in the attempt to take the throne of David before Solomon was anointed, Abiathar was sent away from Jerusalem, though Solomon said he was worthy of death, and Zadok, of the family of Eleazar, was made high priest. (1 Kings 2: 26, 35.) The office remained in that family until the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans. And eighty-one high priests are listed in the Bible and Josephus from Aaron to the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 A.D.

"The vestments of the high priest were far more rich and splendid than those of the priests. Like the latter he wore the linen drawers, but in place of the close fitting tunic he wore *the robe of the Ephod,* which was all blue, of woven work, without sleeves, reaching down to the feet, and drawn over the head through an opening, which was fringed with a border of woven work to prevent its rending. The skirt of this robe was set with a trimming of pomegranates of the three sacred colors, blue, crimson, and purple, with a golden bell between each pomegranate, designed to give forth a tinkling sound as he went in and out of the holy place. Immediately above this robe was the *Ephod* itself, a short cloak consisting of two parts, one covering the back, and the other the breast and upper part of the body, wrought with colors of gold. The two halves were united on the shoulder with two onyx stones, on each of which were engraved the names of six of the tribes. It was gathered round the waist by a curious *girdle* of fine twined linen, adorned with gold, blue, purple, and scarlet. Just above the girdle, and attached to the Ephod by rings and ribbons of blue, was the *Breastplate,* or the *Breastplate of Judgment.* This, like the Ephod, was of cunning work, a square of a span breadth, formed double so as to make a bag, set with 12 precious stones, in 4 rows, each engraved with the name of one of the tribes. Within the Breastplate was the *Urim and the Thummim (Light and Perfection,* Ex. 28: 15-30.) Not a word in scripture explains the meaning of these mysterious objects, but they were cer-

tainly employed in some way unknown for ascertaining the Divine will (comp. 1 Sam. 28: 6; Judges 1: 1; 20: 18; 1 Sam. 14: 3, 18; 23: 9; 2 Sam. 21: 1.) . . . Like the other members of the order, the high priest wore on his head the tiara, but attached to this by a blue ribbon was a gold plate on which was engraved *Holiness to the Lord.* (Ex. 28: 36-39; 39: 30.)" (Maclear)

Context of the Lesson

The context of the lesson is different from that of the ordinary lesson. The book of Leviticus is simply a copy of the laws given at Sinai with reference to the offerings, the priesthood, the great feasts of the Jews, and a number of other sundry regulations. Some have said that all the laws given and incidents mentioned in the book took place within eight days. Another author says, "With these exceptions, the book of Leviticus contains the whole of the legislation delivered in the district of Mount Sinai, during the month and twenty days which elapsed between the setting up of the tabernacle on the first day of the second year after quitting Egypt, and the commencement of the march from Sinai on the twentieth day of the second month of the same year." *(Pulpit Commentary.)* Very few events are recorded in the book of Leviticus. The consecration of Aaron and his sons, and their installment in the priestly offices, and the death of Nadab and Abihu for offering strange fire on the altar are about all the events mentioned in the book.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date of this lesson is 1490 B.C.

PLACE.—Mount Sinai.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Moses, Aaron and his sons, Israelites.

Golden Text Explained

They shall be holy unto their God. The word *holy* has in it the ideas of separation and purity. The priests were separated from the common lot of people for a peculiar service which pertained to God. And since none could do such a service for God, who is the perfection of purity, the priests had to be as clean and pure in their lives and their relationships with their fellow men as possible. The expression *holy unto their God* implies that they were separated for his service. They had no inheritance like the other tribes, and they were not permitted the freedom in many matters, as sorrowing for the dead, and other things, that the common lot of people were allowed.

And not profane the name of their God. To profane the name of God was to make it common; to degrade his name to the level of heathen gods; or to bring disgrace on his high and holy name. Even their physical person was to be such as to exalt the name of God. Their character was to be such as to bring credit on the God whom they served. And even the families of the high priests were to have such a good reputation as to magnify the name of God.

The language of our Golden Text is not said of the high priests only, but of all priests as well. This lesson may well be given a spiritual application to the leaders of the church of the Lord today. Preachers, elders and teachers, and all those who serve the church as deacons, all these should realize that they are to keep themselves,

regardless of where they are, from all sin and imperfection as much as is possible. The name of God is upon them, and any wrong they do will reflect upon the name of God, and will profane that divine name. Through carelessness, or weakness, men may profane the name of God to such an extent that it would be impossible for them to live long enough to repair the damage done. And as the family of the high priests had to be of extra good quality, so the families of the leaders of the church should conduct themselves in such manner as to lend strength, and courage, and dignity to these leaders. The family of a preacher may easily make void all his teachings on moral purity. The family of an elder may be such that no one will pay attention to his warnings and reproofs. For this reason it is said that before a man can serve in the church as an elder he must rule well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity (1 Tim. 3: 4,) and that he must be a man who has children that believe, who are not accused of riot or unruly. (Titus 1: 6.) Any man who cannot control his children should not be selected as an elder; and if after he is selected his children become unruly so as to render his counsel and reproof worthless, he should ask the church to relieve him of his responsibility.

But since our lesson today treats only of the high priest, and since he was a type of Christ, we can see why no one could be a high priest who was not holy unto his God, and why he must not profane the name of God. Along this line it was said of Christ, "For such a high priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needed not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people: for this he did once for all, when he offered up himself." (Heb. 7: 26, 27.) Only that which was holy unto God, and conducted himself in such way as not to profane the name of God could possibly to the least degree be typical of Jesus, who, though tempted in all points like as we, yet lived entirely free from sin. He could even challenge his enemies to accuse him of sin, knowing that they would utterly fail in every attempt to prove him guilty.

Helps on the Lesson Text

Speak unto the priests, the sons of Aaron. All priests were Levites, but not all Levites could be priests. Levites were the descendants of Levi, the son of Jacob. Among the Levites there was the family of Aaron; and it was his sons and their sons, and so on, who were the priests. "These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests that were anointed, whom he consecrated to minister in the priest's office. And Nadab and Abihu died before Jehovah, when they offered strange fire before Jehovah, in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children; and Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest's office in the presence of Aaron their father." (Num. 3: 2-4.) It was the duty of the Levites to care for the tabernacle, to take it down, carry it to the next camp, erect it, and keep all the instruments used in sacrifices clean, and other such duties as were connected in any way with the care of the tabernacle. But the priests offered the sacrifices.

There shall none defile himself for the dead. This means that a priest could not touch a dead person or help prepare the body for burial, as this would render him unclean, or unfit for his priestly

services. Immediately following this prohibition a number of exceptions are made including his family, or near kin. This was a very gracious provision, and one necessary in the very nature of the case, for otherwise if a priest be not allowed to help put away his own dead the cause of God might be reproached.

They shall not make baldness upon their head. This is admittedly a difficult verse as nothing is known about why the prohibition was made. Clarke suggests that the priests of Egypt may have cut their hair in some such fashion, and God did not wish his priests to copy them, but this is nothing but a guess. In Lev. 19: 27, 28 we have the cutting of the hair and *cutting of the flesh for the dead* prohibited. And since in our text this prohibition follows, *nor make any cuttings in their flesh,* it seems probable that they were accustomed to cutting the hair and the flesh for the dead, that is, as signs of grief for the dead. And this God forbade the priests to do. This too is a guess but putting the two passages together seems to suggest this as a possible solution. Another passage seems to support this position. When God wished to describe the mourning over the desolation of Moab, he caused Jeremiah to say, "For every head is bald, and every beard clipped: upon all the hands are cuttings, and upon the loins sackcloth." (Jer. 48: 37.)

The bread of their God, they do offer. The expression, *bread of God,* here is explanatory of the phrase before it, *offerings of Jehovah* made by fire. When an animal was sacrificed, with some exceptions, a part was kept by the priest to eat, and a part was burnt. That which was burnt was looked upon as food for God; it was God's bread, or food.

They shall not take a woman that is a harlot. The expression includes those who might be reclaimed from prostitution as well as those engaged at the time. Nor was a priest allowed to marry a woman who had been put away by her husband. Christians ought to be as careful about such matters as the priests of old were commanded to be. To do either of the things prohibited above might cast reflection upon the priest, and so profane the name of his God whom he represented. We ought also refuse to do anything which might bring reflections upon us, or hinder us in any degree in honoring the name of our God.

He shall be holy unto thee. In verses 6 and 7 it is said the priests shall be holy unto God, but here it is said they shall be holy unto the people. The priests were separated from the people to perform a service for them as well as a service for God. And for the sake of the people whom they served they were to keep themselves morally clean. Preachers today not only serve God, but they serve the people, the churches. For the sake of the people whom they serve, as well as for the honor and glory of God, they ought to be clean.

And the daughter of any priest . . . By profaning herself, the daughter of the priest also profaned her father. It would be fine if all young people could get this lesson. Their conduct reflects upon their parents; good conduct honors parents, and evil conduct dishonors and disgraces parents. Undoubtedly the daughter was put to death, probably by stoning, before her body was burned. The severity of the punishment shows how jealously God protected the honor of his priests. Severe discipline is a powerful restraint in the

lives of people, and more of it should be exercised both in families and churches today.

And he that is the high priest. Clarke says this is the first occurrence of this title. Verses 10, 11, and 12 regulate the conduct of the high priest in times of death of friends or family. A priest may defile himself when his father or mother dies, but not the high priest. No mention is made in case of the death of wife or child.

The crown of the anointing oil. In the margin instead of the word *crown,* the word *consecration* is given. No commentary at hand explains the phrase. But if the word consecration be allowed it would seem to suggest that the holy oil used in consecration is upon him, he is dedicated and consecrated to a holy service, and may not be defiled by partaking in common services, even for his father or mother.

He shall take a wife in her virginity. The high priest must not marry a widow, nor a lewd woman; she must be a woman who has never experienced sex relations with man.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

If sand tables and flannel boards were used in the lesson on the tabernacle, they may be kept in place for this to show the high priests in full uniform going into the holy place, and once a year going into the most holy place, to perform his duties. Emphasis may be placed upon the purity of the high priest, and that they have a right to look to the leaders of the churches to maintain a high degree of moral purity. They can profit by a lesson on how their actions reflect upon the good name of their parents.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The idea of purity of morals should be stressed in these departments. They have a right to look for examples of purity in their preachers, elders, and teachers. Paul told Timothy to be an example to the believers. (1 Tim. 4: 12.) And if young people demand such examples from church leaders, and will be willing to follow such examples when set before them, the church will be cleaner than it can be without such demands. Preachers and elders have no right to indulge in any personal habits, such as profanity, drinking beer or whisky, or smoking, that they would reprove the purest girl in the church if she had the same habit. This is a time in life for these young people when they are liable to think too lightly about their conduct with reference to the good name of their parents. The material of this lesson affords the teacher a good opportunity to emphasize the fact that the conduct of children does reflect upon the parents, and out of respect for their parents on account of their goodness to them through life, they must not indulge in anything against the wishes and counsel of parents that will hurt them.

Young People and Adult Departments

Lessons on proper conduct of children for the sake of parents should remind the parents that they have a responsibility there too. And as the high priest was not to defile himself that he might carry on his work, so we should realize that we must keep ourselves clean from the defilements of the flesh and of the world that we may carry on the work and worship of God both in our homes and in the church.

The separation of the priests is a picture of our separation from the world and its defiling influences.

Topics for Discussion

1. The priesthood was hereditary. When power is confined to one family, or party too long, the trust is usually used for selfish and evil purposes. But Moses was still the ruler among the people, not Aaron. (Num. 12.) And in later times the prophets told priests what to do, and even kings, as Nathan and David; Samuel and Saul. God did not place religious power and political power in the same family or party. Neither should we do so. The Catholic Church did it to the ruin of the civilized world at one time, and is making a supreme effort to do so again. Lovers of religious freedom should beware.

2. Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire and died in less than a week after they began their service. Immediately thereafter God told Aaron to drink no strong drink when he went into the tent of meeting, nor his sons, lest they die. (Lev. 10: 1, 2, 8-11.) Is it possible this warning was given because these priests were drinking when they sinned?

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you get from the daily Bible readings?
In which family was the high priesthood, and when changed from one to the other?
Describe the dress of the high priest.
Discuss the context of the lesson.
What is implied in the word holy, and the word profane?
What application of this can be made to church leaders today?
What can be said in this connection about the families of church leaders?
How does Christ exceed his type in the high priest?
Distinguish between the Levites, the priests, and the high priest.
Whom could a priest help prepare for burial, and the high priest?
What is meant by making baldness on their heads, and cutting the flesh?
What is meant by offering the bread of God?
In what way was the priest holy unto the people?
What was to be done with the priest's daughter who profaned her father?
What lessons should young people get from this today?
What distinction is made between the priest and high priest in our lesson?
What is meant by the crown of anointing oil?
Whom might the high priest marry, and whom might he not marry?

Lesson VI—May 9, 1948

LAWS GOVERNING OTHER PRIESTS

The Lesson Text

Lev. 21: 16-24

16 And Jĕ-hō'văh spake unto Mō'sĕs, saying,
17 Speak unto Aâr'ŏn, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed throughout their

generations that hath a blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God.
18 For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or anything superfluous,
19 Or a man that is broken-footed, or broken-handed,
20 Or crook-backed, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or is scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken;
21 No man of the seed of Aâr'ŏn the priest, that hath a blemish, shall come nigh to offer the offerings of Jĕ-hō'văh made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God.
22 He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy, and of the holy:
23 Only he shall not go in unto the veil, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not my sanctuaries: for I am Jĕ-hō'văh who sanctifieth them.
24 So Mō'sēs spake unto Aâr'ŏn, and to his sons, and unto all the children of Is'rā-ĕl.

2 Kings 23: 4

4 And the king commanded Hĭl-kī'ăh the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the threshold, to bring forth out of the temple of Jĕ-hō'văh all the vessels that were made for Bā'ăl, and for the A-shē'răh, and for all the host of heaven; and he burned them without Jĕ-ru'sā-lĕm in the fields of the Kĭd'rŏn and carried the ashes of them unto Bĕth'-ĕl.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness."* (Ps. 132: 9a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Lev. 22: 10-16.

Daily Bible Readings

May 3. M.....The Priest at the Altar (Lev. 6: 8-13)
May 4. T.....The Priest in the Holy Place (Lev. 24: 1-9)
May 5 W.....The Priest and Continual Burnt Offering (Ex. 29: 38-46)
May 6. T.....The Priest and the Trumpets (Num. 10: 1-10)
May 7. F.....The Priest to Examine Lepers (Lev. 13: 1-8)
May 8. S.....Priest Has Portion of Offering (Num. 18: 7-20)
May 9. S.....The Priest and the Tithe (Num. 18: 21-32)

Lesson Subject Explained

Though Reuben was the first-born son of Jacob, on account of a grievous sin he lost all the rights and privileges usually enjoyed by the first-born (1 Chron. 5: 1, 2.) The birthright went to Joseph, and the blessing was given to Judah. But the tribe of Levi was later chosen to be in the place of the first-born. When Aaron allowed the people to make a golden calf and the Lord had decreed that they should be punished, Moses called for volunteers to be on the Lord's side to do some work for the Lord. All the sons of Levi offered their services and slew 3,000 people for their sins. (Ex. 32: 25-29.) For this unusual zeal it seems rather evident that they were chosen to be in the place of the first-born and to take care of the holy things in connection with the tabernacle worship. They were given to Aaron and his sons, the priests, as assistants in the work of caring for the tabernac.e, taking it down and carrying it to its new location, putting it up, keeping the vessels clean, and to camp immediately around the tabernacle as guard. In this connection the reader should read Num. 1: 47-54; 3: 5-13, 40-54.

The Levites were to collect the tithe of all the people, and that was to be their portion, instead of an inheritance. Then of this tithe the Levites were to give a tithe to Aaron and his sons, the priests, and this was their portion. When the people were settled in Canaan, forty-eight cities were set aside for the tribe of Levi. Of these the

Levites got thirty-five and the priests got thirteen, in which number were included the six cities of refuge.

The Levites consisted of three divisions, Kohathites, Gershonites, and Merarites, named after the three sons of Levi. The sons of Kohath held first rank, perhaps on account of Aaron being of that family, and they took care of the sacred vessels and the ark of the covenant. (Num. 3: 31; 4: 6, 9, 15; Deut. 31: 25.)

The sons of Gershon took care of all curtains, the tent hangings, and the veils. (Num. 4: 22-26.)

The Merarites took care of all boards, pillars, bars, and heavier materials which were moved in carts and wagons. (Num. 7: 1-9.)

The priests were consecrated to their office with rather imposing ceremonies, but not like that of Aaron. Their bodies were washed and anointed with the holy oil, and the priestly garments were then put on. During the time of ministry they wore fine linen drawers, over which was worn a closely-fitting white tunic woven in one piece which reached to the feet. Around the waist was a girdle made of needlework which was of three colors, the sacred colors of blue, purple, and scarlet, and intermingled with white. On their heads was the tiara, made in the form of a flower. It is thought they wore no shoes when at work.

At the service of consecration, the priest, in view of his own weakness, offered a sacrifice for himself. He solemnly laid his hands on the head of a bullock to transfer his sins upon the animal, which was killed, and its blood sprinkled on the horns and base of the altar, and the body was burnt outside the camp. Then one ram was slain as a burnt offering, and one ram as a peace offering. Blood of this latter was smeared on the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the great toe of the right foot in token of their intention to be wholly devoted to the service of God. Following this a wave-offering of cakes was made. (Ex. 29: 10-25.)

Context of the Lesson

For the context of the first part of our Lesson Text see Lesson V.

In the context of the second section of our Lesson Text, we find Josiah, the son of Amon, coming to the throne of Israel when he is but eight years of age. Though his father and grandfather before him were wicked men, it is said of him, "He did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left." (2 Kings 22: 2.) Hilkiah was the high priest at that time. And while some repairs were being made on the house of God, Hilkiah found a copy of the book of the law, which he gave Shaphan, a scribe closely associated with Josiah. It proved interesting reading to Shaphan, so he took it to the king. And when the king heard the words of the law he rent his clothes, for he realized that "great is the wrath of Jehovah that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us." He sent servants to inquire of the prophetess, Huldah, who sent word back to the king that God would surely bring destruction upon the city, but that because "thy heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before Jehovah, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and

hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith Jehovah. Therefore, behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil which I will bring upon this place." Then the king gathered the elders of the people and had the book read before them, and he made a solemn covenant to "Walk after Jehovah, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and all his soul, to confirm the words of this covenant that were written in this book."

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date for the first section is 1490 B.C.; and for the last section of the text the date is 624 B.C.

PLACES.—Sinai for the first section, and Jerusalem for the second section.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, the priests, Josiah, Shaphan, and Hilkiah.

Golden Text Explained

Our Golden Text is taken from a Psalm in which Jehovah was petitioned to pour out his blessing on the sanctuary. In the first part of the Psalm attention is called to David's oath in which he said,

"Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house,
Nor go up into my bed;
I will not give sleep to mine eyes,
Or slumber to mine eyelids;
Until I find a place for Jehovah,
A tabernacle for the Mighty One of Jacob."

At this point in the Psalm it seems the writer considers the house of God built, and so addresses the Lord as follows:

"Arise, O Jehovah, into thy resting place;
Thou, and the ark of thy strength."

Following this we have the language of our text, which is a prayer for the priests who were to do the service of the sanctuary. The writer prays that the priests may be clothed with righteousness. David elsewhere defines righteousness as being all the commandments of God. (Ps. 119: 172.) So he prayed that the priests might wear the garments of obedience, the garb of right living. When Paul viewed the Christian as a soldier in the army of the Lord, he named the breastplate righteousness. The breastplate was for the protection of the person as he faced the enemy. Righteousness affords such protection to us who walk in the ways of the Lord.

When the Lord wrote a letter to the church at Laodicea he accused them of being naked, when they thought they were well clothed and had need of nothing. He counseled them to buy of him white garments, that the shame of their nakedness might not appear. (Rev. 3: 18.) David prayed that the priests of the house of God might be clothed in righteousness that their shame might not be manifest unto all. The best dressed man in America is naked if not clothed in the righteousness of God, in the true sense of that term. Peter advised women to be more concerned about the adorning of the inner man than they are about the dressing of the outward man.

The garments of righteousness are worn by the inner man, and the finest, costliest clothes in the land cannot take the place of these garments.

Helps on the Lesson Text

He . . . that hath a blemish. In this paragraph the physical perfections of priests are emphasized. Those who were not near perfect specimens of humanity were not allowed to serve in the public duties of the tabernacle. They could not offer the bread of God, that is, officiate in the offerings where God is viewed as partaking of the altar with the priest and the one making the offering. This can easily be given a spiritual application to teach the necessity of spiritual perfection in those today who commune with the Lord. However perfection here could not be used in the absolute, but the relative sense.

A blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or anything superfluous. Adam Clarke suggests that the term *blind* here must be understood of a man who has but one eye, as one totally blind could not see to serve, and so would not need to be told that he would not be allowed to serve. And certainly the loss of one eye would be a blemish which would well be included in such a list.

A lame man would not have the strength to lift the heavy pieces of meat which were used in the sacrifices. And even if he were physically able to do the work, the fact that he was a cripple would mean that he failed to measure up to the standard God required of those who rendered this public service.

A flat nose ruins the appearance of a person about as much as the loss of an eye, a bad scar, or any other blemish. And anything superfluous as warts and unnatural growths on the face and neck tend to render one's person contemptible, and were judged as disqualifying blemishes.

The broken hand or broken foot would naturally hinder a person from rendering some of the services, but it was not so much one's inability to serve as it was the appearance of the person having the defect. The crook-backed, or hunchback, as we speak of him was not allowed to serve. Neither was the dwarf qualified to serve as a priest. He may have been qualified mentally, and may have had the strength to perform the service, but the appearance was out of harmony with that which God required. As said before these men might work for the Lord, but in the language of the text, "He shall not come nigh to offer the offerings of Jehovah made by fire; . . . he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God."

He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy, and of the holy. The offerings made to God are here classed as holy and most holy. In the most holy class we find the meal offering (Lev. 2: 1-3;) the sin offering (Lev. 6: 29;) the trespass offering (Lev. 7: 1;) and the showbread (Lev. 24: 5-9.) All these are said to be *most holy* unto Jehovah. But the heave offerings, wave offerings, first fruits, firstlings, and devoted things were classed as *holy* unto Jehovah. (Num. 18: 11-19.) If a man was in the family of Aaron he was privileged to partake of these offerings, whether holy or most holy, even though he had one or many of the blemishes mentioned above.

He shall not go in unto the veil, nor come nigh unto the altar. He might be used for work elsewhere, but these duties which brought

him into close contact with the people, and into the presence of God were denied the man with a blemish.

The high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the threshold. The priests of the second order here were simply the priests. At this time the high priest was sometimes called the chief priest, and the regular priest called the second priest. (Jer. 52: 24.) And the keepers of the threshold were a third order of priests, and perhaps sons of Aaron who had blemishes which disqualified them for first-line service. These men were given the duty by king Josiah to bring out of the temple all the vessels which were made for the service of Baal. It has been said that the priests were so neglected in the matter of tithes that they became extremely poor, especially in times of general idolatry. Since people worshiped other gods they would not bring in the tithes, so the priests suffered. In times like this many of the priests offered themselves as priests in the high places to make the offerings to other gods. It is also said that some of them made offerings at both the temple and the altars of Baal. In this way vessels might get exchanged, and some of Baal's vessels be in the temple, and some temple vessels be at the altars of Baal. This seems to be indicated here. And Josiah was determined to purge the temple of all unholy things belonging to Baal.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

The best belongs to God. This statement might serve as a topic for the lesson in these departments. As God demanded the best specimens of manhood to make his offerings, so he requires the very best we are able to give him. We should be on our very best behavior when we attend worship; we should have the best lesson possible and recite it to the best advantage possible; and we should beautify our classroom and make it the best and most beautiful place for study we can, and a place where we can bring our associates to class with us and not be ashamed of the appearance of things in general.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Unblemished service might be made the topic of the lesson in these departments. Our service which we render to God may be blemished by our conduct at home, at school, in the social gatherings we attend, and at church gatherings. If God would not accept offerings at the hands of a physically blemished priest, can we expect him to accept our offerings of praise, prayer, and communion if we have become blemished by improper conduct? We may also be blemished by our conversation. Ugly talk, impure conversation, swearing and cursing are serious blemishes which render one unfit to make offerings to God. Young people in these departments are forming characters of the material furnished them by their teachers. In this lesson is afforded the opportunity to impress them with the need of personal purity of character that they may render an unblemished service to God. Characters will likely always be what you are helping them to be right now. The principles and ideals you instill will help determine what they will be all their lives. So drive this lesson home and plant deeply the importance of unblemished service to a just and holy God.

Young People and Adult Departments

The lessons suggested above are good for these departments, for they too should be intent upon rendering to God an unblemished service. We have no priest, no class of priests, today as they had under the law. We all are priests to God. (1 Pet. 2: 9; Rev. 1: 6.) It is as necessary that we be as free from spiritual blemishes as the priests of old were to be free from physical blemishes. For this reason Jesus is purifying the church that at the last great day he may present it to himself a "glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5: 26, 27.) And those who are free from blemishes will have a part in that great presentation, but those who are blemished will have no part.

Topics for Discussion

1. Perfect specimens of manhood among the priests were used for the public offerings, while those not so perfect were used in less conspicuous services. Would this suggest that we should use the cleanest characters in the most responsible positions in the public service and worship?

2. If a flat nose or an unnatural growth on the eyelid would disqualify a man for first-line duty in the priest's office, should not bad habits, as drinking and smoking, disqualify one today for front-line duty as preaching, overseeing the flock, teaching?

3. If God's priests of old were to be clothed in righteousness, how much more now should Christian priests be clothed with righteousness in (1) conduct; (2) in conversation; (3) and in motives and desires. Selfishness should be unknown; a sincere desire to be helpful to all should control us; and above all a jealous concern for the purity of the church in doctrine and practice should characterize every priest of God today.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you get from the daily Bible readings?
Why was the tribe of Levi given the place of the first-born?
How did the Levites and priests have an income?
How many divisions of the Levites, and what were their respective duties?
Discuss the dress and consecration of priests.
Discuss the context of the second section of the Lesson Text.
What is the topic of the Psalm from which comes our Golden Text?
How do New Testament writers use our clothing in lessons of righteousness?
Discuss the different blemishes which disqualified a man as a priest.
Could a blemished son of Aaron perform any service at all?
Of what might the blemished priests eat? How were these offerings classified?
Who were priests of the second order, and keepers of the threshold?
What duty did Josiah put upon these priests?
What spiritual lessons can you draw from this lesson on blemishes?
Which is generally more repulsive, a blemished face or character?

Lesson VII—May 16, 1948

LAWS OF THE SACRIFICES

The Lesson Text

Lev. 17: 8-16

8 And thou shalt say unto them, Whatsoever man there be of the house of Is'rā-ĕl, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, that offereth a burnt-offering or sacrifice,

9 And bringeth it not unto the door of the tent of meeting, to sacrifice it unto Jĕ-hō'văh; that man shall be cut off from his people.

10 And whatsoever man there be of the house of Is'rā-ĕl, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, that eateth any manner of blood, I will set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people.

11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life.

12 Therefore I said unto the children of Is'rā-ĕl, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood.

13 And whatsoever man there be of the children of Is'rā-ĕl, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, who taketh in hunting any beast or bird that may be eaten; he shall pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust.

14 For as to the life of all flesh, the blood thereof is *all one* with the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Is'rā-ĕl, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh; for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off.

15 And every soul that eateth that which dieth of itself, or that which is torn of beasts, whether he be home-born or a sojourner, he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even: then shall he be clean.

16 But if he wash them not, nor bathe his flesh, then he shall bear his iniquity.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Whosoever toucheth the altar shall be holy."* (Ex. 29: 37b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Lev. 17: 1-7.

Daily Bible Readings

May 10. M.....Law of Burnt Offerings (Lev. 1: 1-17)
May 11. T.....Law of Meal Offerings (Lev. 2: 1-16)
May 12. W.....Law of Peace Offerings (Lev. 3: 1-17)
May 13. T.....Law of Sin Offerings (Lev. 4: 1-21)
May 14. F.....Law of Sin Offerings, Cont'd. (Lev. 4: 22-35)
May 15. S.....Law of Trespass Offerings (Lev. 5: 1-19)
May 16. S.....Offerings for Trespass Against Neighbors (Lev. 6: 1-7)

Lesson Subject Explained

The offering of animals in sacrifice to God was no new thing among the people of God in the days of Moses. In the very morning of time we find Cain and Abel offering their sacrifices to God. (Gen. 4: 3-5.) And that such offerings were commanded we have the best of evidence, for Abel offered his sacrifices by faith. (Heb. 11: 4.) To do a thing by faith is to do it according as God commands, for faith comes by hearing the word of God. (Rom. 10: 17.) Cain's sacrifice was not of faith, so was rejected by the Lord. Hence we learn the lesson that if we wish our worship to be acceptable to God, we must offer it according to the commandments of God. We should further notice that God had not said to Cain, Thou shalt not offer the fruit of the ground as an offering to Jehovah. But in spite of the fact that God had not specifically forbidden fruit of the ground as a sacrifice, he rejected it. So we should learn that God will reject

anything and everything we offer to him that is not commanded, even though he has not called it by name and said, Thou shalt not offer it.

When Noah came forth out of the ark, he offered sacrifices. (Gen. 8: 20, 21.) We find no more mention of sacrifices until we come to Abraham on his long trek from Ur of Chaldees to Canaan, between Bethel and Ai, where he "builded an altar unto Jehovah, and called upon the name of Jehovah." (Gen. 12: 8.) And there were priests in those days, for we learn of Abraham paying the tithe to Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of the Most High God. (Gen. 14: 18, 19.) When God commanded Abraham to offer his son, a ram was burnt instead as an offering to God. (Gen. 22: 13.) When Jacob returned from Paddan-aram and bought land near Shechem, the first thing he did was to erect an altar to God. (Gen. 33: 20.) Instructions at Sinai for the priests to sanctify themselves shows that there were priests among the people of Israel before the law was given. (Ex. 19: 22, 24; 24: 5.)

The sacrifices of the Israelites were divided into two kinds. (1) The bloody sacrifices, and (2) the unbloody sacrifices. The first class consists of four separate offerings—a. The *burnt-offering;* b. The *peace-offering;* c. The *sin-offering;* and d. The *trespass-offering.*

The second class consisted of three kinds of offerings—a. The *first-fruits* and *tithes;* b. The *meal* (meat) *offerings* and *drink-offerings;* and c. The *incense offering.*

These were the offerings commanded through Moses, and in connection with these offerings of the people the high priest and the priests of God occupied their time and talents. The book of Leviticus is given to teaching concerning these offerings, as to what was to be offered, where it was to be offered, how it was to be offered, and what part both the priest and the one who made the offering was to perform in the service. The regulations concerning these sacrifices were so complex that the people in general could hardly be expected to be familiar with them. It was necessary that certain men be set apart to give their whole time to a study and practice of the laws concerning these offerings.

Context of the Lesson

It is to be remembered that the whole of the book of Leviticus was given during the time the people were camped at Sinai. When God had spoken the Ten Commandments, the people requested that he not speak with them any more, but let Moses give them his words. The Ten Commandments were then written on tables of stone, and immediately following God gave Moses ordinances which he was to set before the people. (Ex. 21: 1.) The book of Leviticus is but a continuation of those instructions which were begun in Exodus. The ordinances of Exodus have to do largely with the tabernacle, its furniture, and the dress of the priests. While the book of Leviticus regulates the offerings, the feasts, ceremonial cleanness and uncleanness, chastity, and some civil regulations with reference to interest, redemption of servants and so on.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date of this lesson is 1490 B.C.

PLACE.—Mount Sinai.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Moses, Aaron, and the children of Israel.

Golden Text Explained

Whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy. From this statement it seems that the people of Israel got the idea that the altar was a place of refuge, where they might escape death. Or it may be that customs of other nations caused them to think such. It is well known that in many systems of heathen worship the environs of the temples were sanctuaries for criminals. A person could commit any crime he pleased, and if he could but get within a certain distance of the temple of the gods, he could not be apprehended and punished for his crime. In view of such a practice God ruled, "And if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbor, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die." (Ex. 21: 14.) Is it implied here that the altar would be a place of safety for one who had not sinned presumptuously? We have two records of the use of the altar for such purposes. First, Adonijah attempted to take the throne before David could anoint Solomon for the place. But the effort came to nought, and Adonijah fled to the altar and held to the horns of it until he had extracted a promise from Solomon for his safety. But Solomon only said, "If he shall show himself a worthy man, there shall not a hair of him fall to the earth; but if wickedness be found in him, he shall die." (1 Kings 1: 52.) The next instance is found in the same connection, when Joab, a supporter of Adonijah for the crown heard that Adonijah had been put to death for asking for Abishag for his wife, and when Abiathar had been judged worthy of death for his part in the attempt to take the throne, but had been spared only because he had helped to bear the ark of Jehovah, Joab fled to the altar and took hold of its horns. He was commanded to come away from the altar, but he refused. Word was sent to the king, who sent word back to slay him at the altar. (1 Kings 2: 28-34.)

The words of our text are capable of two interpretations. First, everything that touches the altar is, by that touch, made holy. To this Adam Clarke thinks Jesus referred when he said that the altar sanctifies the gift. (Matt. 23: 19.) If this be the true meaning, the word *holy* is to be taken in the sense of belonging to God, which meaning it certainly has. And since that which belongs to God is clean, the word holy has that connotation. The *holy land,* the land that belonged to God in a peculiar way. The *holy city,* God's city. So that which touches the altar is holy; it belongs to God, and must be used for his glory.

The second interpretation which may be put upon the language is that everything which is brought to the altar *must be holy.* The *Pulpit Commentary* gives this interpretation. From this point of view it would be wrong to bring sick, crippled, or maimed animals to the altar. Priests who had not been properly consecrated, or who had not gone through the proper washings before coming to the altar would be unholy, unfit to serve at the altar.

This latter interpretation seems to be more in harmony with the Scriptures generally. The presumptuous sinner was not made holy by taking hold of the horns of the altar. Joab was not by Solomon counted holy on account of being at the altar. So we know that sinners were not made holy by taking hold of the horns of the altar. And we know that God refused to accept offerings which were not according to his specifications. (Mal. 1: 6-14.) The fact that these

unworthy offerings were placed upon the altar did not make them holy and acceptable to God.

From this we may easily draw the lesson that everything brought to God's altar and used for his glory today must be holy. Paul exhorts to give our bodies a holy sacrifice, and says it is but our reasonable service. (Rom. 12: 1, 2.) In another place he warns us against presenting the members of our bodies unto sin, or Satan, for the accomplishment of his unholy purposes; but to present our members to God for the accomplishment of his purposes. (Rom. 6: 12-14.) "Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some unto honor, and some unto dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work. But flee youthful lusts, and follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." (2 Tim. 2: 20-22.) From this we learn that men must purge themselves from lusts and all forms of ungodliness and worldliness in order to be holy vessels, meet for their Master's use. Especially must all those who occupy places of public responsibility be free from everything which makes them unholy, or gives the world a reason to doubt their personal holiness.

Helps on the Lesson Text

Bringeth it not unto the door of the tent of meeting. According to this law all offerings must be made before the tent of meeting. When the temple was built, that was the place where the Jews had to make their offerings. The woman of Samaria argued with Jesus whether Jerusalem or Mount Gerizim was the place for men to worship. (John 4: 20.) Until the law was given at Sinai the people built altars and sacrificed wherever they pleased. However there were some exceptions made in this law with reference to some of the prophets. Samuel told Saul to gather the people to Gilgal and he would meet him there and offer burnt offerings (1 Sam. 10: 8), and when Samuel did not appear as soon as Saul wished, or thought he should, Saul proceeded with the offering, and was severely rebuked for it. But Samuel intended to make the offering, and not before the tent of meeting. Again, when Samuel anointed the son of Jesse to be king, God told him to take a heifer to sacrifice. And on Mount Carmel Elijah offered sacrifices to God. (1 Kings 18.)

I will set my face against that soul that eateth blood. God has never allowed men to eat blood. And the penalty for doing so in this case was to be cut off from among the people. He was to be denied the privileges of the covenant; he was an outcast, with no inheritance in the land.

For the life of the flesh is in the blood. This is stated as the reason why God will not allow men to eat blood. Dr. Harvey (1628) who discovered and demonstrated the fact that the blood circulates in the body, said of the blood, "It is the fountain of life, the first to live, the last to die, and the primary seat of the animal soul; it lives and is nourished of itself, and by no other part of the human body." *(Pulpit Commentary.)*

For it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life. God ordained that atonement for sins should be made with blood because of the fact that life is in the blood. When the blood of an

animal was poured out, the life of that animal was given in the place of the life of the person making the offering. When Jesus died and his blood was shed, this shedding of blood signified the giving of his life. And when we read that he offered his blood for our sins, we are to remember that his life was in the blood, and that shedding his blood for us simply means that he gave his life for us. We had sinned and were worthy of death; he died in our place; his life was given to death instead of our lives. It was his blood that made atonement for our sins only in that his life was in his blood; his life was given instead of my life, and in the giving of his life, atonement was made for me.

Who taketh in hunting any beast or bird. Beasts and birds taken in hunting must have their blood let, or taken, while it is warm and will flow freely. If the beast or bird is allowed to lie until the animal heat is gone and the blood will not flow, the blood will be distributed throughout the body and will be eaten with the flesh. For this reason God demanded that the blood be poured out and covered with dust.

Every soul that eateth that which dieth of itself, or that which is torn of beasts. That which died of itself would not, of course, have the blood taken from it. Our ideas of sanitation will not allow us to eat such beasts or birds as die of themselves, but the Jews on coming out of Egypt did not have such strict ideas as that. This law forced them to recognize that they were defiled, and they were to go through the ceremony of washing, or bear the consequence of eating the blood. Beasts or birds torn by animals would not be properly relieved of their blood, so those who ate them had to wash to be clean from their defilement.

This law against eating blood and things strangled was based upon a principle that knows no dispensations. So when the law of Moses came to an end, people still did not have the right to eat blood. In the Jerusalem conference this question, along with other matters of the law of Moses, came up for consideration. The apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem handed down an inspired decision, saying, "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication." (Acts 15: 28, 29.) From this we gather that the Holy Spirit guided in this decision, and that these were *necessary* things. In preparing fowls for cooking many people do no more than break the neck and allow the fowl to strangle in its blood. The blood largely remains in the flesh, and is eaten with the flesh. Hunters kill birds and never let them bleed. They eat the blood with the flesh. The Holy Spirit says that proper bleeding of beasts and birds is a *necessary* thing.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

For those who use sand tables and flannel boards the tabernacle with the great altar in front of it can be used as an effective means of teaching these children the place where God commanded the people to worship him. The importance of obeying God in what may seem to us small and unimportant matters may be emphasized in this

lesson. And, though children cannot appreciate this lesson on eating blood, yet they can learn the principle; they can learn that God forbade such. And they can be led to form an aversion to such a practice, which aversion will be a source of strength in later life when they do learn to appreciate the deeper lessons connected with the practice. It is a mistake to think that because a child cannot understand a principle, he should not be taught to know the principle. He can learn the principle in early life, and then grow into the understanding and appreciation of the deeper meanings of the principle in later life.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The preciousness of blood might be a good topic for the lesson in these departments. (1) Our own blood. The life is in it. Transfusions are often made where one gives blood to another. We are giving *life* to that person, our own life. If some one has given me a part of his life, I should be very deeply grateful to that one. (2) The blood of Christ. His life was in his blood; in the shedding of his blood he gave his life for mine. Unlike a transfusion where only a part is given, he gave all his blood, his life, for me. How deeply grateful all of us should be for this great sacrifice on his part. Is there anything you would not do for one who saved your life by transfusion? We ought to be willing to do more for Jesus, because he gave all his blood to save us from eternal death.

Young People and Adult Departments

The lessons in the above paragraph will be good in these departments.

The bringing of all their offerings to the door of the tent of meeting was designed for the good of the people. (1) It brought them often into the presence of God, and so caused them to think often of God, his holiness, and his goodness to them. (2) It would lead them to associate their material blessings with divine providence; they were giving back to God what he had given them. And we need to remember that all we have comes from God. (3) It helped them to see in God a friend to the sinner, but an enemy to sin. God was the enemy of sin because he took a life on account of sin; he was a friend of the sinner because he was willing to accept the life of an animal instead of the life of the sinner.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you get from the daily Bible readings?
Give a brief history of sacrifices among humanity.
Can you name the bloody offerings, and the unbloody?
Why the need of priests to make these offerings?
Discuss the Context of the Lesson.
What false idea did people get about holding to the horns of the altar?
Who was slain while holding to the altar?
Give two possible interpretations of our Golden Text.
What New Testament teaching do we have concerning holiness?
Where were all offerings of the Jews to be made?
What was the penalty for eating blood of animals or birds?
Why did God forbid the eating of blood?

Why was blood used for an atonement?
What is meant by the statement that Jesus shed his blood for us?
Could Jews eat animals that died of themselves, and what was the penalty?
Why were they defiled when they ate such meat?
Is it a violation of the law of Christ to eat blood?
How many people in the preparation of fowls violate this law?
Is this law of Christ binding on Gentiles as well as Jews? (See Acts 15: 28-29.)

Lesson VIII—May 23, 1948

LAWS OF THE FEASTS

The Lesson Text

Lev. 23: 26-38

26 And Jĕ-hō'văh spake unto Mō'sĕs, saying,
27 Howbeit on the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement: it shall be a holy convocation unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Jĕ-hō'văh.
28 And ye shall do no manner of work in that same day; for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement for you before Jĕ-hō'văh your God.
29 For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day; he shall be cut off from his people.
30 And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any manner of work in that same day, that soul will I destroy from among his people.
31 Ye shall do no manner of work: it is a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.
32 It shall be unto you a sabbath of solemn rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye keep your sabbath.
33 And Jĕ-hō'văh spake unto Mō'sĕs, saying,
34 Speak unto the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl, saying, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto Jĕ-hō'văh.
35 On the first day shall be a holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work.
36 Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Jĕ-hō'văh: on the eighth day shall be a holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Jĕ-hō'văh: it is a solemn assembly; ye shall do no servile work.
37 These are the set feasts of Jĕ-hō'văh, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto Jĕ-hō'văh, a burnt-offering, and a meal-offering, a sacrifice, and drink-offerings, each on its own day:
38 Besides the sabbaths of Jĕ-hō'văh, and besides your gifts, and besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill-offerings, which ye give unto Jĕ-hō'văh.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"But he that is of a cheerful heart hath a continual feast."* (Prov. 15: 15b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Lev. 23: 1-8.

Daily Bible Readings

May 17. M.....Feast of the Passover (Num. 28: 16-25)
May 18. T.....Feast of Pentecost (Num. 28: 26-31)
May 19. W.....The Greatest Feast of Pentecost (Acts 2: 1-41)
May 20. T.....Feast of Tabernacles (Num. 29: 12-39)
May 21. F.....Feast of Tabernacles Restored (Neh. 8: 1-18)
May 22. S.....The Day of Atonement (Lev. 16: 1-34)
May 23. S.....The Great Atonement (Heb. 9: 6-28)

Lesson Subject Explained

In order for people to have interest in the affairs of one another they must have knowledge of one another; and this knowledge on a

community or national scale can best be gained by public gatherings where the people can mingle for a number of days in succession. So the Lord commanded the people to assemble at stated times during the year, not only that they might worship the Lord by making the various offerings, but to keep the people cemented together in the bonds of brotherly love, and to foster a national spirit among them. The people had lived together forty years in the wilderness, but in the land of Canaan they were to be divided and scattered over all the land. What a feast of good fellowship it must have been three times a year for them to come together to renew old friendships, to talk of their experiences while in the wilderness and to tell each other of the goodness of God in giving them a permanent home in the land which flowed with milk and honey.

There were really four of these annual feasts, though only three times a year they gathered to hold them. The Feast of Tabernacles was preceded by the day of atonement by five days in the seventh month. None but males were required to go to these feasts, but the women often went, and many of them, no doubt, as regularly as the men. They were under divine protection during the time they spent going to these feasts. "Three times in the year shall all thy males appear before the Lord Jehovah, the God of Israel. For I will cast out nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou goest up to appear before Jehovah thy God three times in the year." (Ex. 34: 23, 24.)

The first of these annual feasts was Passover, which lasted from the 14th to the 21st of Nisan, or Abib, and corresponds with our April. This feast commemorated the saving of the first-born from the last plague brought upon the Egyptians. (Ex. 12; 23: 14-17.)

The next feast was Pentecost, called the Feast of Weeks (Ex. 34: 22;) Feast of Harvest (Ex. 23: 16;) Feast of First-fruits (Num. 28: 26.) It is better known to us as Feast of Pentecost. The word *Pentecost* means *fiftieth*, it being just fifty days from Passover. (Lev. 23: 15, 16.) "The character of the feast was pre-eminently an expression of gratitude for the harvest, which commenced with the offering of the first sheaf of ripe barley at the Passover, and ended with that of the two loaves now presented and made of the newly ripened wheat. In its festive joy the manservant and maidservant, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow were to share with the freeborn Israelite, who was to be reminded of the bondage in Egypt, and his obligation to keep the law (Deut. 16: 12.)" (Maclear.)

The third gathering of the people was at the Feast of Tabernacles, or of ingathering. This feast was held on the 15th day of the seventh month, Tisri, and corresponds with our October. The feast lasted for seven days, during which time the people were to make and live in booths made from branches of trees to remind them of the time they lived in the wilderness, and of the goodness of God in giving them houses to live in when they reached the land of Canaan. This feast the people forgot after the days of Joshua and did not keep it until in the time of Nehemiah. (Neh. 8: 17.)

"The frequent recurrence of the sabbatical number in the organization of these feasts is too remarkable to be passed over, and (as Ewald observed) seems, when viewed in connection with the sabbatical sacred times, to furnish a strong proof that the whole system of the festivals of the Jewish law was the product of one mind.

Pentecost occurs seven weeks after the Passover; the Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles last seven days each; the days of Holy Convocation are seven in the year—two at the Passover, one at Pentecost, one at the Feast of Trumpets, one on the Day of Atonement, and two at the Feast of Tabernacles; the Feast of Tabernacles, as well as the Day of Atonement, falls in the seventh month of the year; and, lastly, the cycle of annual feasts occupies seven months, from Nisan to Tisri." (Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible.)*

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date of this lesson is 1490 B.C.

PLACE.—Mount Sinai.

PERSONS.—God, Moses, and the children of Israel.

Golden Text Explained

He that is of a cheerful heart. Our Golden Text is one of the sayings of Solomon, the wise man. And to get its true meaning we must take into consideration other statements in the context. In verse 13 we read, "A glad heart maketh a cheerful countenance." Solomon is emphasizing the fact that the heart, the attitude or disposition, has much to do in determining our state of being. With this statement he draws the contrast, "But by sorrow of heart the spirit is broken." In another place he says, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." (Prov. 4: 23.) If the heart is glad the countenance will be cheerful; but if the heart is filled with sorrow the spirit will be broken. This is a warning to those who brood over their misfortunes, and magnify them to the extent that their life becomes sour, and their disposition ruined so far as doing any good is concerned.

This thought is emphasized in our text by contrasting the first line of the verse, which reads, "All the days of the afflicted are evil." The word *afflicted* does not mean some physical affliction, such as disease, or prolonged illness. Its meaning in this passage is determined by the word which stands in apposition to it, and that is *cheerful heart.* Hence the *afflicted* are those who are moody, discouraged, gloomy; those who are continually looking on the dark side of life. All the days of such people are evil. The day never comes that brings them something good; the day of gladness and joy and deep and lasting satisfaction has for them never arrived. If something good has come into their lives, they know it cannot last, and may even result in some evil. They curse the past and dread the future; the present is always worse than the past, but never as evil to them as they fear the future is bound to be.

Now, with this disposition of mind Solomon contrasts the one who is of cheerful heart. He has continual feast. Every day is a holiday. Joy and gladness, mirth and freedom are the dominant notes in his heart's song. Anxious care never leaves its furrow across his brow, nor "the cares that distress" turn to silver his hair before his time. As laughter, congeniality, and unselfishness characterize feasts, so he that is of a cheerful heart is continually known for such characteristics.

But two things are necessary in order that a person may be of a cheerful heart such as that of which Solomon speaks. First, one

must be at peace with God. The enemies of God cannot have real lasting happiness. They may have the pleasures of this world which are of short duration, and are usually followed by remorse and regret, perhaps suffering. But pleasures that bring no regret are the pecular heritage of those who are at peace with God. How can one be cheerful of heart when he knows that he is exposed to the wrath of an avenging God? How can one be cheerful when he realizes that the next moment may find him in endless torment? The second thing necessary for the cheerful heart of which Solomon speaks is to be at peace with one's fellow man. How can one who has no friends, and deserves none, be of a cheerful heart? Is one so depraved as to find actual delight in making enemies of his fellows? As much as lieth in you live in peace with all men. (Rom. 12: 18.) "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy." (Jas. 3: 17.)

Helps on the Lesson Text

Tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement. This seventh month means the seventh month of their ecclesiastical year; it was the first month of their civil year, and was called *Tisri.* The day of atonement was on the tenth day of this month. On that day an unusual number of offerings, about fifteen, were made. The main offering consisted of two goats, one of which was slain and burnt as an offering for the sins of the people, and the other was sent away into the wilderness, after the sins of the people had been confessed over its head. Of this ceremony Adam Clarke says, "The two goats made only *one sacrifice,* yet only one of them was slain. *One* animal could not point out both the *divine* and *human* nature of Christ, nor show both his *death* and *resurrection,* for the goat that was *killed* could not be made *alive.* The *divine* and *human* natures in Christ were essential to the grand expiration: yet the *human* nature alone *suffered,* for the *divine* nature could not *suffer;* but its *presence* in the human nature, while agonizing unto death, stamped those agonies, and the consequent death, with infinite *merit.* The goat therefore that was *slain* prefigured his human nature and its *death;* the goat that *escaped* pointed out his *resurrection.* The one shows the atonement for sin, as the ground for justification; the other Christ's victory, and the total removal of sin in the sanctification of the soul."

It shall be a holy convocation. The word convocation means a *calling together.* It was to be holy in the sense of belonging to the Lord, and with reference to the condition of the people who were to be ceremonially and physically clean on that day.

Ye shall afflict your souls. The word afflict is the translation of a Hebrew word which means *to lower.* Hence to afflict one's soul is to humble one's self. They were to remember and confess their sins, to humble themselves in God's sight by thinking upon their unworthiness.

Ye shall do no manner of work. This was a Sabbath day, a day of complete rest. If any disregarded this rule he was to be cut off, or destroyed, from among his people. And this is said to be a "statute for ever" among them. But the penalty of a law can last no longer than the law, hence the term *for ever* in this place does not mean endless. A thing is said to last *for ever* when it is intended to con-

tinue throughout the whole of a period or dispensation. In this sense circumcision was an everlasting covenant. And so was the Sabbath given them for an everlasting covenant. It lasted throughout the whole of the period of time for which it was given.

In the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even. The Jews counted their day from sunset to sunset. So at sunset of the ninth day of Tisri their Day of Atonement began, and ended at sunset on the tenth day of the month.

On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the feast of tabernacles. Just five days after the Day of Atonement the people were to cut branches of trees and make booths, or tabernacles, to live in for one week. This was to remind them of their life in the wilderness, and to keep alive in the minds of their children the providence of God in bringing the people safely through the wilderness to Canaan. The Lord's supper is today a proof of the death of Jesus for our sins. No one could start such a practice in memory of the death of one who never died without so much criticism that the practice could not be perpetuated. The fact that the Lord's supper has been observed from the days of the apostles until now is proof that Jesus died. So the fact that the people lived in booths to commemorate their experiences in the wilderness was proof to following generations that a people had actually been delivered from bondage, and that God cared for them in the wilderness.

These are the set feasts of Jehovah. These feasts which have been mentioned in the preceding chapter Moses said were the *set feasts;* these were feasts of national significance, which all the men of Israel were to attend. They were of a public nature and all were commanded to attend for their own good, for the good of the nation, and to guarantee the success of the feasts. But as for their Sabbaths, gifts, vows, and freewill offerings, these were of a more personal and individual nature. Certainly they were important, and the people were to observe them, obey the commandments concerning them; but they were not of that public nature, and did not require such nation-wide cooperation and attendance as these set feasts.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

The meaning of these feasts can best be taught these children by using the national holidays which we observe. True these feasts had their religious significance, but they also had their national meanings too. So by the use of our national holidays the teacher can get them to understand somewhat of their meaning, though they will not be interested in the manner in which these feasts were observed.

The goodness of God may be taught in these departments in that he promised to protect the people and the land during the time the men were attending the feasts. If a man's family could not attend on account of sickness, it was still his duty to go. But if he lived near the border of a land occupied by hostile enemies he would be afraid to go away from home. But God assured them he would protect the family while he was gone.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

These children should be able to memorize the names of all the feasts and the names of the months, as well as the day of the month,

in which the feasts occurred. It will be well for the teacher in advance to make a chart of the feasts and the time of their observance, and then put that chart on the blackboard. They will also be able to appreciate somewhat the significance of these feasts. It might be well to have certain ones to make special study of these feasts and give a report before the class, especially can this be done in the Senior Department. A good Bible Dictionary will furnish all the material and references necessary for gathering the information needed.

Young People and Adult Departments

The above suggestion for individual work and reports should be used in these departments. The references in the Daily Bible Readings at the head of this lesson will furnish material for these reports if a good Bible Dictionary is not available.

In connection with these feasts there was what was called the *holy convocation* and *solemn assembly*. These words described gatherings which were of a purely religious character. There was nothing of a national or political nature done on these days. And on these days there was to be complete cessation of work, and a severe penalty attached for disobedience to this commandment. The Lord knew the nature of man. He knew that man needed days set apart to the cultivation of the spiritual within him. This is still the need of man, though much neglected on account of our complex ways of living. If every child of God could, and would, take the first day of the week for the cultivation of the spiritual within him, give the day to worship, reading the Bible, visiting the sick and wayward, the church would be more active, accomplish untold good, and people would be happier. If the teacher can put over this lesson to his class the time will have been unusually well spent.

Topics for Discussion

1. As the Jews were to afflict, or humble, their souls and be clean and holy before the Lord on the Day of Atonement, so must those who seek blessings from God today humble themselves before God, confess their sins, abstain from evil to the extent of their ability, serve him faithfully, and worship him truly.

2. When the high priest went in to make atonement for the sins of the people, they stood without praying. They were never allowed to enter that most holy place; they were an excluded people. But when Christ entered heaven itself for us he did it as a forerunner for us; he opened up the way into the presence of God, and we may come to his throne of grace with boldness, and finally into his very presence to live forever. (Heb. 4: 14-16.)

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you get from the daily Bible readings?
Discuss the benefit of these set feasts from the point of view of fellowship.
How many times were the Jews to gather for these feasts?
What distinction was made between males and females in attending feasts?

What promise did God make the Jews when attending the feasts?
What was the first feast of the year, and when was it celebrated?
By how many names was the second feast of the year called?
How was the time for this feast determined?
What was the third gathering of the year called? How was this feast celebrated?
What is said in our lesson concerning the number seven in connection with these feasts?
Discuss the Golden Text?
What do you know of the civil year and the ecclesiastical year of the Jews?
Discuss the offering of goats on the Day of Atonement.
What is a holy convocation?
What is meant by afflicting one's soul?
What was the value of the law against work on the days of holy convocation?
When did the Jewish day begin and end?
What do you know of the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles?
Did this feast cease to be celebrated? When was it renewed?
What was the difference between these set feasts and their Sabbaths and other offerings?

Lesson IX—May 30, 1948

LAWS GOVERNING VOWS

The Lesson Text

Lev. 27: 1-8

1 And Jē-hō'văh spake unto Mō'sĕs, saying,
2 Speak unto the children of Īs'rā-ĕl, and say unto them, When a man shall accomplish a vow, the persons shall be for Jē-hō'văh by thy estimation.
3 And thy estimation shall be of the male from twenty years old even unto sixty years old, even thy estimation shall be fifty shĕk'ĕls of silver, after the shĕk'ĕl of the sanctuary.
4 And if it be a female, then thy estimation shall be thirty shĕk'ĕls.
5 And if it be from five years old even unto twenty years old, then thy estimation shall be of the male twenty shĕk'ĕls, and for the female ten shĕk'ĕls.
6 And if it be from a month old even unto five years old, then thy estimation shall be of the male five shĕk'ĕls of silver, and for the female thy estimation shall be three shĕk'ĕls of silver.
7 And if it be from sixty years old and upward; if it be a male, then thy estimation shall be fifteen shĕk'ĕls, and for the female ten shĕk'ĕls.
8 But if he be poorer than thy estimation, then he shall be set before the priest, and the priest shall value him; according to the ability of him that vowed shall the priest value him.

Num. 6: 1-8

1 And Jē-hō'văh spake unto Mō'sĕs, saying,
2 Speak unto the children of Īs'rā-ĕl, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall make a special vow, the vow of a Năz'ĭ-rīte, to separate himself unto Jē-hō'văh,
3 He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink; he shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any juice of grapes, nor eat fresh grapes or dried.
4 All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the grape-vine, from the kernels even to the husk.
5 All the days of his vow of separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in which he separateth himself unto Jē-hō'văh, he shall be holy; he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow long.
6 All the days that he separateth himself unto Jē-hō'văh he shall not come near to a dead bodv

7 He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die; because his separation unto God is upon his head.
8 All the days of his separation he is holy unto Jē-hō'văh.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High."* (Ps. 50: 14.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Num. 6: 13-20.

Daily Bible Readings

May 24. M.....Vows of Men and Maidens (Num. 30: 1-8)
May 25. T.....Vows of Widows (Num. 30: 9-16)
May 26. W.....Vows Concerning Property (Lev. 27: 9-15)
May 27. T.....Vows Concerning Real Estate (Lev. 27: 16-27)
May 28. F.....Vows Paid Promptly (Deut. 23: 21-23)
May 29. S.....Vows Made in Distress (Ps. 66: 13-15)
May 30. S.....Vow Made by Hannah (1 Sam. 1: 9-18)

Lesson Subject Explained

Our lesson today has to do with vows, and the laws of regulating vows, during the Jewish dispensation, and under the law of Moses. "A vow is a religious engagement or promise voluntarily undertaken by a person towards Almighty God." (Horne.) Vows were in general use before the time of Moses. "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, and Jehovah will be my God, then this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." (Gen. 28: 20-22.) And Job, who is now accepted as living before the time of Moses, said, "Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he will hear thee; and thou shalt pay thy vows. Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee; and light shall shine upon thy ways." (Job. 22: 27, 28.)

The law of Moses did not demand vows of the people; it rather discouraged them by the strict regulations which it placed on the people making vows. If a person vowed to give something to God, and then wished to redeem that thing, he was required to pay into the treasury one fifth more than the actual value of the thing redeemed. This regulation was not made solely for the benefit of the priests, to whom the redemption was paid, but to discourage people in the practice of making vows.

A vow had to be spoken before it was counted as binding upon a person. "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: 23.) And in Num. 30: 3, 7, 11 we learn that if a girl or a wife makes a vow and her father, or husband, *heard* the vow he might either allow or disallow it. So it seems that thought with reference to a vow, or intentions to make a vow, were not counted as binding; not until the intention had "gone out of the lips" was it regarded as binding upon the person.

There were three classes of vows. (1) There were vows of *devotion*. In this class of vows a person might devote himself, his children (except the first-born,) his animals (except the first-born,) and any or all his property. Things thus devoted were held for

sacred uses only, even persons being used in the service of the sanctuary. Under this rule Absalom secured the privilege of going to Hebron to further his plans for seizing the throne. (2 Sam. 15: 7-9.) Under this rule Hannah devoted her son to the service of God, and never redeemed him. (1 Sam. 1, 2.)

(2) There were vows of *abstinence*. Under this section a person might make a vow to abstain from food, or from wine, for a certain length of time. Or parents might make a vow of this kind which would be binding upon their children. Thus Samson was devoted to God from his birth by the direction of the Angel of Jehovah. (Judg. 13.) John the Baptist is usually accepted as one of this class devoted from birth.

(3) There were vows of *destruction*. Inspired writers were careful to keep these types of vows separate by using different Hebrew words when speaking of them. Of this last class Horne says, "The species of *cherem* (Hebrew word for this class of vow) with which we are best acquainted, was the previous devotement to God of hostile cities, against which they intended to proceed with extreme severity; and that with the view more to inflame the minds of the people to war. In such cases, not only were all the inhabitants put to death, but also, according as the terms of the vows declared, no booty was made by any Israelite; the beasts were slain; what would not burn, as gold, silver, and other metals, was added to the treasure of the sanctuary; and everything else, with the whole city burnt, and an imprecation pronounced upon any attempt that should ever be made to rebuild it. Of this the history of Jericho (Josh. 6: 17-19, 21-24; 7: 1, 12-26), furnishes the most remarkable example. In Moses' lifetime we find a similar vow against the king of Arad. (Num. 21: 1-3.)"

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date for this lesson is 1490 B.C.

PLACE.—Mount Sinai.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Moses, and the children of Israel.

Golden Text Explained

Offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving. In order to get the point in our Golden Text it will be necessary to take a look at the whole of the Psalm. Asaph wrote this Psalm, according to the heading. He was the chief, or superintendent, of the Levites in the time of David. (1 Chron. 16: 4, 5.) The Psalm sets forth Jehovah as the God and Judge of all the earth, both of the righteous and the wicked. In the first six verses he calls the heavens and the earth to witness the judgment. In verses 7 through 15 he addresses the godly of Israel, giving them assurance that he is their God, and that he will not reprove them for their sacrifices and burnt offerings, and at the same time warning them not to place their trust in the outward act of offering animals to him. In verses 16 through 21 we have an address to the ungodly among the Israelites, reproving them sternly for their hypocrisy, their hatred of instruction, their ungodly speech, their lack of natural affection, and their low and unworthy idea of the nature of God. The Psalm then closes with a final word of warning to the wicked, and a word of encouragement to the righteous.

Throughout the whole of the Psalm runs the thread of thought that God is not to be praised and worshiped by mere externals; he is looking for praise and thanksgiving out of a pure heart, wholly surrendered to him and to his way. So the first line of our text exhorts them to offer their sacrifices with thanksgiving. Sacrifices without the proper attitude of heart would be worthless. We have too long looked upon the Mosaic law requiring the external, and paying no attention to the internal. While the law did have its externals, many more than the gospel of Christ has, yet God wanted them to go beyond the form and learn to cultivate the heart along with the ceremonies. And offerings which were not accompanied with the proper disposition of heart were not acceptable to God. In verses 9 to 13 God tells them he is not looking for animals, for every beast of the forest, and the cattle on a thousand hills belong to him. It is proper attitude of heart he desires. This is a good lesson for us. God is not looking to us for pretty music to cheer him; he wants a pure heart filled with love and praise for him. The external, the mechanics of singing, is a secondary matter; the attitude of heart is the primary thing.

And pay thou vows unto the Most High. The *Pulpit Commentary* suggests that the thought here is "and so pay thy vows." That is, as you are to offer your sacrifices with thanksgiving, in the proper frame of mind, so you are to pay your vows to God cheerfully and with thanksgiving in your heart. In connection with vows offerings were made, and in Lev. 22: 17-25 we learn what he would accept and what he would not accept. And the *paying* of vows refers to these offerings; they were to be made cheerfully to be acceptable to God. The thought of paying vows is a common one in the book of Psalms. See Psalms 22: 25; 56: 12; 66: 13; 116: 14, 18.

Helps on the Lesson Text

When a man shall accomplish a vow. Verse 2 is a rather obscure statement. The thought is this: when a person has made a special vow consecrating either man or beast to God, the priest shall determine the value of the person or beast, according to the ability of the one making the vow to pay it. If the one who made the vow wishes to pay the priests that amount of money the thing consecrated, whether man or beast was free, but if the thing was not redeemed it belonged to the sanctuary to be used according to other regulations which governed such matters.

Thy estimation shall be. It was the duty of the priests to determine the value of land, houses, animals, and other things which might be devoted to God. But the Lord set the value which should be placed on human beings, in ordinary cases. The following table will help to get these values in usable form:

I. Table for males.
   1. From one month to five years old, 5 shekels.....about $ 3.00
   2. From five years to twenty years old, 20 shekels...about $12.00
   3. From twenty years to sixty years old, 50 shekels..about $30.00
   4. Those above sixty years old, 15 shekels.....about $ 9.00

II. Table for females.
   1. From one month to five years old, 3 shekels.....about $ 1.80
   2. From five years to twenty years old, 10 shekels..about $ 6.00

3. From twenty years to sixty years old, 30 shekels..about $18.00
4. Those above sixty years old, 10 shekels.....about $ 6.00

The value of the shekel has been variously estimated from fifty to seventy-five cents in our money. Its value in the above table is set at sixty cents. From these values it will be seen that males were consistently higher. However aged women held their value better than aged men. Males from five to twenty were valued at 20 shekels, but when they reached sixty they were valued at only 15 shekels. But women of sixty and over were valued as highly as the females from five to twenty.

But if he be poorer than thy estimation. The table above is the regular estimation, but the Lord knew that some would be so extremely poor that they would be unable to pay these amounts. So the poor might go before the priest and relate his circumstances, and the priest would set an amount consistent with the ability of the man to pay. It may be said to the credit of the priests that they did not become rich by setting the estimation beyond the ability of poor people and taking their property away from them. Things not redeemed by the payments of these values at the consummation of vows were to be held by the priests for the use of the sanctuary.

The vow of a Nazirite. The Nazarite vow is so named from the Hebrew word used, and not because of any connection with the city of Nazareth; and Jesus was not a Nazarite because he came from Nazareth. He was not a Nazarite at all. Bible scholars are about agreed that this vow was in use among the Jews before the law was given, hence only a few regulations are made concerning it, and many things left unexplained about it which we would like to know. A man might be a Nazarite for life, or he might take the vow for a shorter period of time.

He shall separate himself from. To separate one's self from a thing was to abstain from that thing. So the Nazarite was to abstain from wine and strong drink; he was not even to drink grape juice, or eat grapes, either fresh or dried. One author thinks the grape was the forbidden fruit which Eve ate, and for that reason people wholly devoted to God must refrain from eating that fruit. That is only a guess, and perhaps a wild one.

There shall no razor come upon his head. "To the Jew, differing in this from the shaven Egyptian and the short-haired Greek, the hair represented the virile powers of the adult, growing with its growth, and failing again with its decay. To use a simple analogy from nature, the uncropped locks of the Nazarite were like the mane of the male lion, a symbol of the fulness of his proper strength and life." (*Pulpit Commentary.*) At the expiration of his vow his head was to be shaved and all the hair burned under the sacrifice of the peace offering which he was required to make. (Num. 6: 18.)

He shall not make himself unclean. We learned that the priests were not to make themselves unclean by touching the bodies of the dead, except in case of near kin. But here we learn that the Nazarite was not to make himself unclean by touching the dead body, or coming near it in helping to make preparation for burial, of even his father, mother, brother, or sister. And if one should fall dead so near the Nazarite as to make him unclean certain offerings were required to make him free of the defilement. (Verses 9-12.)

He is holy unto Jehovah. For the duration of the Nazarite vow the man was to give himself wholly to sacred services. It was a complete separation from the things material and temporal to things which pertained to God. As long as the separation to God was upon his head, that is, as long as his hair was long as a sign of his separation to God, he was to give himself wholly to the work of God.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Samuel's mother made a vow to give him to the Lord. She kept that vow and gave him to the Lord all the days of his life. This can be used both to get the attention of these children, and to illustrate the meaning of vows to them. It was simply a sacred or religious promise. To fail to fulfill one's vow was to break a promise one made to God. One had to be careful what he vowed to do, lest he be accused by the Lord of breaking his vow. The lesson of being careful of our promises, and of keeping promises made can be taught these children.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The lesson suggested above should be enlarged upon in these departments. These boys and girls are entering a period in life when they need encouragement to be careful of their speech. While vows are not now made with the sanction of the Lord, as they were in Old Testament times, yet we give our word to do this or that for others. One's word should be held very sacred. One ought to keep his promise to do a thing even if he has to suffer physically or financially to do so. There are few things more dishonorable than breaking a promise, or failing to keep one's word. Failing to pay debts falls in this class. One's reputation can be ruined quicker by failing to pay his debts than in most any other way. Preachers and elders of the churches who do not keep their promises in the home, in social circles, in financial deals, or in political circles are not fit to serve in the positions they hold. If only this one lesson is driven home, the class period will have been very profitably spent.

Young People and Adult Departments

The lesson of keeping one's word or promise suggested above should be dwelt upon in these departments too.

When people marry they promise to be true to each other. This promise is of the same nature as the vows of the Old Testament. To regard lightly your word in this matter may soon lead to the divorce court. If one values his word of honor he will do that which he promised on his wedding day to do.

When people make the "good confession," they promise the Lord they will love and obey him the balance of their lives. Their word is given; it has all the force of a vow. To be careless and indifferent in serving the Lord is to regard lightly one's word of honor.

Topics for Discussion

1. The abstinence of the Nazarite may suggest the self-denial of the Christian in:

(1) The grape, and the wine therefrom, has always been the symbol of sensual delights. As the Nazarite abstained from the grape,

so Christians are to keep themselves from the sensual delights of this world.

(2) Among the Jews unshorn locks were the sign of virility and strength, and the fact that they were not cut off suggested that the whole of the man was given to God. So we are to give our bodies to God to be used in his service, making no reservations, either in our physical or mental strength.

(3) The Nazarite avoided the dead, which was a symbol of uncleanness. The Christian is to deny himself of all ungodliness and worldly lusts; he is to abstain from the very appearance of evil, and from all that tend to make unclean.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you get from the daily Bible readings?
What is a vow? Give examples of vows before the time of Moses.
Did the law of Moses demand or regulate the making of vows?
When did an intention become a vow?
Who might allow or disallow vows made by maidens? Wives? What about a widow?
What were the vows of devotion?
What were the vows of abstinence? Give examples.
What were the vows of destruction? Give examples.
Discuss the Golden Text.
Who determined the value of things devoted to God?
Discuss the tables of values for human beings given in the lesson.
What is the value of the shekel?
What provision was made for the poor man?
From what was the Nazarite to separate himself?
What was peculiar about the head of the Nazarite?
What was the law of the Nazarite concerning the dead?
What is meant by the separation unto God being on his head?
In what way, and for how long, was he holy unto Jehovah?

Lesson X—June 6, 1948

LAWS CONCERNING THE CITIES OF REFUGE

The Lesson Text

Num. 35: 9-21

9 And Jĕ-hō'văh spake unto Mō'sĕs, saying,
10 Speak unto the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl, and say unto them, When ye pass over the Jordan into the land of Cā'năan,
11 Then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you, that the manslayer that killeth any person unwittingly may flee thither.
12 And the cities shall be unto you for refuge from the avenger, that the manslayer die not, until he stand before the congregation for judgment.
13 And the cities which ye shall give shall be for you six cities of refuge.
14 Ye shall give three cities beyond the Jordan, and three cities shall ye give in the land of Cā'năan; they shall be cities of refuge.
15 For the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl, and for the stranger and for the sojourner among them, shall these six cities be for refuge; that every one that killeth any person unwittingly may flee thither.
16 But if he smote him with an instrument of iron, so that he died, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death.

17 And if he smote him with a stone in the hand, whereby a man may die, and he died, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death.
18 Or if he smote him with a weapon of wood in the hand, whereby a man may die, and he died, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death.
19 The avenger of blood shall himself put the murderer to death: when he meeteth him, he shall put him to death.
20 And if he thrust him of hatred, or hurled at him, lying in wait, so that he died,
21 Or in enmity smote him with his hand, so that he died; he that smote him shall surely be put to death; he is a murderer: the avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death, when he meeteth him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."* (Psalm 46: 1.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Deut. 19: 1-10.

Daily Bible Readings

May 31. M.....Cities of Refuge Appointed (Josh. 20: 1-9)
June 1. T.....Law of Refuge in Operation (1 Kings 2: 36-46)
June 2. W.....Levites Lived in Cities of Refuge (Num. 35: 1-8)
June 3. T.....Intentional Murderer Not Protected (Num. 35: 22-28)
June 4. F.....Plurality of Witnesses Necessary (Num. 35: 29-34)
June 5. S.....Eye for Eye and Tooth for Tooth (Deut. 19: 15-21)
June 6. S.....God Our Rock and Refuge (Ps. 62: 1-12)

Lesson Subject Explained

From the time of Noah the law has been, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." (Gen. 9: 6.) And it seems that the closest of kin to the one murdered was the one to shed the blood of the murderer. And he was called the "Avenger of blood." We are told that among the Bedouins and a few other Arab tribes the killer may pay a certain sum of money and be free. But if the payment is refused by the nearest of kin, the "law of blood" is in operation, and three days and four hours are given for the killer to escape. After that time "any person within the fifth degree of blood from the homicide may be legally killed by any one within the same degree of consanguinity to the victim." However the law of Moses did not allow such freedom, restricting the punishment only to the one guilty of the crime. "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin." (Deut. 24: 16.) And in later years we see this law respected by Amaziah, king of Judah. Servants had slain his father, and when he became king he slew these servants. "But the children of the murderers he put not to death; according to that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, as Jehovah commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall die for his own sin." (2 Kings 14: 6.)

Cities were appointed as places of refuge for the slayer until he could be given a fair trial in his home city. If he was judged guilty of murder, he was punished; the avenger of blood was allowed to take his life. But if he could prove, to the satisfaction of the elders of his city, that the death was accidental and unintentional, he was free from the avenger of blood provided he stayed in the city of refuge and its suburbs, which was a distance of two thousand cubits around the city. If he wandered beyond those limits and the avenger

of blood found him and took his life the avenger was within his legal rights, and was not judged guilty of murder. The one who took refuge in the city had to live within the limits of the city as long as the present high priest lived. But after the death of the high priest in office at that time the one who had taken life might go back to his home city, and the avenger of blood had no right to take his life. (Josh. 20: 6.)

The three cities appointed on the west side of Jordan were, (1) Kedesh, in the land of Naphtali, about twenty miles southeast of Tyre. (2) Shechem, in the hill country of Ephraim, between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. (3) Hebron, which was in Judah, the city where David reigned the first seven years after he became king.

The three cities appointed on the east side of the Jordan were, (1) Bezer, in the tribe of Reuben, in the plains of Moab, the site of the city is not known today. (2) Ramoth in Gilead, in the tribe of Gad; site unknown today. (3) Golan, in Bashan, in the tribe of Manasseh; site unknown, but most likely in that district known as Gaulonitis. "The Gemara notices that the cities on each side of the Jordan were nearly opposite each other, in accordance with the direction to divide the land into three parts. (Deut. 19: 2.) Maimonides says all the 48 Levitical cities had the privilege of asylum, but that the six refuge-cities were required to receive and lodge the homicide gratuitously (Calmet, on Num. 35.)" (Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.)

Context of the Lesson

In the context of this lesson we have the instructions given for the division of the land of Canaan among the tribes of Israel west of the Jordan. The two and one half tribes had already been given their portion east of the Jordan. A committee was named whose responsibility it was to make the division. This committee was composed of Eleazar, the high priest, and Joshua, and a representative of each of the tribes, including one from the half-tribe of Manasseh. In all there were twelve men to make the division.

Also in the context of this lesson we have provision made for the cities in which the Levites were to live. They did not receive a portion of land like the other tribes, but were given cities in which to dwell. These cities had suburbs extending two thousand cubits (about three-fifths of a mile) in each of the four directions to give them room for their cattle and sheep. This was in addition to one thousand cubits suburb beyond the city wall. These cities were distributed among the twelve tribes so as not to burden any one tribe by so many tax-free cities within its borders. These cities belonging to the Levites included the six cities of refuge. (Josh. 14: 1-5.)

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date of this lesson is 1451 B.C.

PLACE.—In the plains of Moab, near Jericho. (Num. 33: 50; 35: 1.)

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Moses, and the children of Israel.

Golden Text Explained

God is our refuge and strength. What a refuge the child of God has! Can anything be more enduring? Can any refuge be more

secure? "Mountains are the grandest of God's earthly works; natural images of majesty, strength, durableness. Rearing their peaks above the clouds, they gather the airy treasures of snow and rain; and pour from never-failing fountains the streams that water the valleys and feed the plains. Natural fortresses, where liberty has often found an impregnable asylum. Yet they are perishable. Waters wear their rocky sides. Earthquakes and landslides topple their crags into the valleys. Volcanic fires sometimes, as in our own day, tear them from their ancient foundations, and hurl their ruins into the sea. Such an overthrow of what seems strongest and most stable in outward nature, is in the text the image of the possible failure of all earthly support, defense, comfort, hope. But he who built the mountains and gave ocean its bounds, fails not, changes not." (*Pulpit Commentary.*)

This Psalm is an effort to get men to put their trust in Jehovah instead of the many things on which men depend. There are some who trust in riches. Of them the Psalmist says, "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother." (Ps. 49: 6, 7.) And there are those who put their trust in man, and the power of man to help them. Of these the Psalmist says, "Give us help against the adversary; for vain is the help of man." And again, "It is better to take refuge in Jehovah than to put confidence in man. It is better to take refuge in Jehovah than to put confidence in princes." (Ps. 60: 11; 118: 8, 9.) There are others who put their trust in themselves, and of them Solomon says, "He that putteth his trust in Jehovah shall be made fat. He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." (Prov. 28: 25, 26.) In this connection the reader should study Psalm 91, which carries this heading, "Security of him who trusts in Jehovah."

The time to take refuge in Jehovah is, of course, at all times, continually. But there are special times when we need a place of refuge. The very word suggests a place of safety in time of storm. So there are times of storm in life when we need a place of refuge and safety. (1) In times of public calamity and disaster. When nations are at each other's throats, and war is threatening it would be so much better for all of them to turn to God rather than trust in their military might to settle their differences. (2) When trouble comes into the home if husband and wife would turn to God for wisdom and strength to do right instead of going to the divorce courts many homes could be saved, and many homeless children could be saved for the church and society. (3) When strife and division threaten the life of the church men ought to take refuge in God. If they would turn to him instead of secretly plotting to carry their own points and have their own ways the church would not be put to shame. (4) Juvenile courts are overloaded with cases of delinquent children and state reformatories have no room for others to enter. Men are propounding ways to remedy the situation. Experts in psychiatry and sociology are being called in to find a way to improve conditions. If men would turn to God in this time of storm and take refuge in him, learn of his ways, and walk in his paths conditions would immediately improve.

A very present help in trouble. The idea here is that God is a refuge that is accessible to all men at all times. A business firm advertizes that it is as near you as your telephone. To his children

God is nearer than the telephone. "In him we live and move and have our being." Ask for his help, and you shall receive. His wisdom assures us that he has a way to help; his omnipotence assures us that he is able to help; and his infinite love guarantees his willingness to help us beyond that which we are able to ask or think.

Helps on the Lesson Text

That the manslayer that killeth any person unwittingly. The cities of refuge were not, as many heathen temples, asylums for the wicked of the nation. The cities in which the temples of the heathen gods were located were the most wicked cities of the world. And it is said that the Roman government had to disregard the laws which made the precincts of the temples a place of safety because so many wicked persons had taken refuge there. The cities of refuge among God's people were for those who had killed unintentionally.

Until he stand before the congregation for judgment. Those who took refuge in heathen temples were not even subject to trial. But those who took refuge in these cities provided by Moses were safe from the avenger of blood until there was time for a free and fair trial before the congregation, and in later times before the elders of the city in which the manslayer lived. The manslayer might bring witnesses, if there were such, to prove his innocence. He was tried before his own people who knew him, and this contributed to justice. If a man was known to be mean and capable of murder, his home town people would be pretty sure to know about it; but if he were a meek and sympathetic man, a man of tender heart, incapable of a gross and cruel crime, his neighbors would likely know that.

For the children of Israel, . . . the stranger . . . the sojourner. Provisions were made for the stranger and sojourner among the people of Israel. They were allowed to rest on the Sabbath, and many other privileges were afforded. And now these cities of refuge are open to them, and they were to have the right of fair trial the same as the Israelite.

But if he smote him with an instrument of iron. A number of instruments are here mentioned, even including one's fist, or hand; if one kills with such instruments there could be but little doubt of his intentions. If one shot an arrow a distance it would be possible that he did not see a man, or that the arrow was carried by the wind far enough aside from the point at which he aimed to kill a man some distance away. There was every possibility, even probability, that the slaying was accidental. But not so with a piece of iron, or wood, or one's hand. Death by such instruments could not well be accidental. So those who killed with such instruments were counted as murderers.

The avenger of blood shall himself put the murderer to death. It is usually agreed that if the avenger, nearest of kin, could kill the manslayer before he reached the city of refuge it was his privilege. But the purpose of the law was to give the manslayer protection until he could have a fair trial. Then after he had been judged not guilty of murder he was to stay within the city of refuge until the death of the high priest then in office. If the avenger found him outside that city he had the privilege of killing him. (Num. 35: 25-28.)

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Those teachers who use sand tables or flannel board may catch the interest of these children by picturing a man fleeing to the city of refuge with the avenger of blood in close pursuit with his hand raised, holding a sword with which to take the life of the innocent man. The goodness of God in preparing a city to which they can flee; the justice of God in giving the man a safe and fair trial before his own people, and in delivering up the one found guilty of first degree murder, are all lessons of interest to these children. They can also understand something about God being our place of refuge from sin, trouble, sorrow, and hardships; and that God can be had as a helper in our troubles if we become his children and call upon him. What would the parents of Moses have done if God had not been their helper? What would Samuel's mother have done without God in the time of her sorrow and disappointment? Though God does not perform miracles today, yet he does give help to his people; and he does not have to work miracles to help us. It is not for us to inquire into his ways, but to rely upon him for that help we need which is beyond the range and ability of man to give us. Children should be taught to pray for such help, and to depend upon God to give them such help in their times of need. Principles taught them along this line now will be of great value to them all through life.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The value of human life. This might well be the theme of this lesson for these departments. First the value of human life is seen in the laws and regulations God made to keep men from killing others. The commandment read, "Thou shalt not kill." And the penalty for murder was death. Though some are opposed to capital punishment, it has always been God's law. It has been opposed on the ground that it takes forever from a man the opportunity to repent and turn to God for forgiveness. But the man murdered also loses the opportunity. And if our courts would mete out swift and certain punishment for crime there would be much less crime to contend with. If all murderers were put to death there would be less killing in the land. The value of human life is also suggested in that God made provision for the safety of the one who killed by accident. And from these considerations the teacher can easily pass on to the value of the soul. If the physical life is of such value, how much more valuable is the soul of man. God thought the soul of man to be worth the life of his only begotten Son.

Young People and Adult Departments

The thoughts suggested above are of equal value in these departments.

But these departments may go further, even beyond the limits of our lesson text, and find that the shedding of blood pollutes the land; and that nothing can cleanse, or expiate, the land except the blood of the murderer. Is not our land polluted today? This idea of pollution of the land is not part of the ceremonial law of Moses; in these verses (33, 34.) God is stating a principle, a universal principle, which made necessary this law given through Moses. Does not that same

principle exist today? Would not our country be cleaner and more righteous before the Lord if murderers were required to pay the penalty?

By an easy step these departments may go on to the atonement of Christ. We all had sinned; the penalty is death. Our eternal death would satisfy the demands of the law, but that would mean our eternal destruction from the presence of God. So Christ shed his blood as an expiation for our sins, and God accepts his death in lieu of our penalty. The sins that might have been expiated in our blood, death, were expiated, or atoned for in his death, and through the shedding of his blood. Wonderful provision of the gospel! It is a cause of thanksgiving to God and to his Son, and a reason for unceasing service in his vineyard as long as we live on this earth.

Topics for Discussion

1. Whether or not the cities of refuge are to be taken as a type of the church, we may draw an analogy with profit. The manslayer had safety in the city of refuge as long as the high priest then living lived. The church is our place of safety from sin and temptation now. And if we have a refuge there as long as the high priest lives, we can rest in the assurance there will always be a place of safety, for he lives forever.

2. The accidental manslayer met with an unexpected calamity, a tragedy. If God was thoughtful for such unexpected tragedies in the life of his people then, will he not care for us in all such situations and circumstances of life today? Is there no place to which we can go for protection and comfort? God is our refuge, and the fellowship of kindred spirits in the church a great source of comfort and encouragement.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you get from the daily Bible readings?
What law did God make concerning murder in the time of Noah?
Who is the avenger of blood? What is the practice among Bedouins?
What was God's law concerning the one who was to suffer for a crime?
Did reaching a city of refuge free a man from trial for his crime?
On what condition was a man safe from the avenger of blood?
Name and locate the cities of refuge west of the Jordan.
What were the cities of refuge east of the Jordan?
Who had the responsibility of dividing the land among the tribes of Israel?
How would you define the city limits of the cities of refuge?
Name some things in which men are warned not to put their trust.
How many nations take refuge in God?
When do homes have need of God as a refuge?
At what special times should a church look to God for refuge?
What is meant by our God being a present help in trouble?
What do you know of a manslayer's right of trial?
What provision was made for strangers and sojourners?

Lesson Subject Explained

The law concerning keeping the Sabbath was given to the Jews only; no Gentile wa[illegible]

[illegible]ed to keep the Sabbath. But Moses says plainly [illegible]

Context of the Lesson

In the [illegible]

2. Did Jesus break the law regarding the observance of the Sab-

It is said the Dr. Palmer set on the

the apostles, and we hearken to it when we do what is taught in those writings, when we "observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command you this day."

All these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. He then enumerates separate curses in the city, in the field, their food, their offspring, the ground, and the increase of their herds and flocks. In no way should they prosper if they disobeyed God. It is possible that some thought they could refuse to obey and yet not suffer. Lest they might take refuge in this hope Jehovah said, "And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart, to destroy the moist with the dry. Jehovah will not pardon him, but then the anger of Jehovah and his jealousy will smoke against that man, and all the curse that is written in this book shall lie upon him, and Jehovah will blot out his name from under heaven." (Deut. 29: 19, 20.)

Jehovah will send upon thee cursing. In this paragraph are listed diseases that were to plague the people if they became disobedient. Pestilence was to cleave (be glued to, or cemented) to them; consumption, fever, and inflammation; even the sword of the enemy would pursue them as a consequence of their disobedience.

The heaven that is over thy head. In times of drought the heavens have a peculiar color, somewhat the appearance of brass; this is an expression denoting long periods without rain. Jehovah would make the rain to be dust is an expression emphasizing the extreme dryness of the weather. "The allusion is probably to those clouds of dust and sand which often fill the air in Palestine, when the heat is intense and there has been no rain for a season; the wind becomes a vehement sirocco, and the air is filled with sand and dust, and is like the glowing heat at the mouth of a furnace." (*Pulpit Commentary.*)

Until thou be destroyed. Disobedience brings destruction, not because God delights in punishing his people until they be consumed; but because of the nature of sin and the holiness of God. If God were to allow people to sin at will and never exact punishment we would have little respect for him as a moral governor of the universe. Governors who allow crime to go unpunished are suspected of being in sympathy with, if not actually profiting by, the deeds of the criminal. So God cannot allow sin to go rampant in the land and enjoy the respect of righteous angels and men. Sin unpunished would be a reflection upon his character. But it need not be thought that God brought these curses upon them with miraculous directness. Had we lived in that time we likely could have analyzed the situation and felt that we could account for their suffering through natural causes. These curses are rather a prediction of what will follow the types of disobedience they were to indulge in.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

It will perhaps be best to choose two or three good examples of disobedience, such as the first sin by Adam, the sin of Moses, and a New Testament character as Ananias (Acts 5) and tell the story of each, pointing out the consequences suffered. Then it will be well to emphasize the disobedience of the Jews as a nation, and show that

they have lost their land, their right to self-government, that they are scattered throughout the whole earth, and despised in practically every nation where they have lived. This is part of their punishment for disobedience in rejecting and crucifying Christ. Then an application in our own lives. Disease comes as a consequence of sin. Righteousness, abstinence from indulgence and dissipation is the best guarantee of good health and long life. It may not be possible to explain in these departments *how* God sends such upon people, but you can call attention to the fact that such consequences inevitably follow sin.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Again it may not be wise to dwell upon *how* God punishes sin in these instances, but here the teacher has a great responsibility to get this lesson over, drive it home, so that it will be a restraining force in the lives of these young people. These are apt to think they can go so far and stop; they love to think they know when to stop, and pride themselves in self-discipline so that they can take their fling occasionally without harm coming to them. It should be pointed out that millions of others have gone to eternal suffering in exactly the same way. No one ever started out to see how fast and how soon he could go to hell. All those who have gone there, and are now going, felt like they could indulge in sin a little and then stop. Only a fool will tamper with a course which has sent millions to eternal punishment. This lesson should be used to instill the fear of sin in the hearts of these boys and girls; they need to be made afraid to tamper with sin.

Young People and Adult Departments

To do right for the love of right is good, but there are some people who cannot be reached with such a principle. They need to be made to realize what eternal torment will mean. And since we are furnished with two methods of keeping people in the right way, why use only one? Teach them right for right's sake; but teach them the consequences of sin too. There is as much in the Bible about the terrible consequences of sin as there is about the wonderful rewards of righteousness. And regardless of age, this lesson is needed to be a restraining force to keep people from slipping, neglecting, disobeying, finally despising.

Topics for Discussion

1. Can you harmonize the love, mercy, and longsuffering of God with the curses he pronounced upon the disobedient?
2. Is God as willing to punish the wicked as he is to bless the good? (Ezek. 18: 21-24.)
3. The disobedience of the Jews in the wilderness deserved prompt punishment, even extinction, but God spared them for the sake of his name and his oath to the fathers. Read God's justification of his action in Ezek. 20: 5-26.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you learn from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?

Name some instances of the fulfillment of the prophecies of this chapter.
What great song was inspired by the fulfillment of these prophecies?
How did Isaiah speak of the disobediences of the people, and God's disappointment?
What does the New Testament have to say about such disobedience?
Discuss the context of this lesson.
What is the meaning of *transgression* and *disobedience*?
Illustrate the fact that every sin received its just recompense of reward.
Who is spoken of as receiving sorer punishment than these people of old?
What different attitudes may one take towards the salvation offered today?
Of which one are we most in danger? And what two classes of people neglect the Lord?
How does Jehovah speak to people? And what is meant by hearkening to his voice?
What is said of the man who thinks he can sin and escape punishment?
What curses were pronounced upon the persons of the disobedient?
How were the elements about them to be effected by their disobedience?
To what extent were the disobedient to be punished?
Were direct miraculous means to be used in punishing the disobedient?
Why did God not destroy the Jews in the wilderness?

MAP ILLUSTRATING
GENESIS & EXODUS
ASIA MINOR
ARMENIA
MT. ARARAT
CASPIAN SEA
L. VAN
Van
Tabriz
L. MARTIANUS
Tarsus
Samosata
Charchemish
Dur-Sharukin
PADAN ARAM
Haran
ASSYRIA
Nineveh
Arbela
Calah
Balis
MESOPOTAMIA
Asshur
MEDIA
CYPRUS
Hamath
Riblah
Circesium
THE GREAT SEA
Baalbec
Palmyra
Ecbatana
Sidon
Mt. Hermon
Tyre
Hobah
Damascus
EUPHRATES
TIGRIS
SYRIA
Dan
Is
Sepharvaim
Accad
Cutha
SUSIANA
Shushan
Dothan
Mahanaim
Shechem
Succoth
Dorsippa
Babylon
CANAAN
Penuel
BABYLONIA
ELAM
Zoan
Askalon
Pelusium
Jerusalem
Kufa
SHINAR
Calneh
GOSHEN
Tarpanhes
Gaza
Mt. Nebo
ARABIAN DESERT
EDEN
NOD
Succoth
Gerer
Hebron
Rameses
Pithom
Beersheba
Zoar
Erek
RIVER
Etham
Vale of Siddim
On
Migdol
Baal-zephon
Korna
Memphis
Pi-hahiroth
Kadesh-barnea
Mt. Hor
CHALDEA
EGYPT
Marah
Ur
RIVER
PERSIA
Bassorah
ARABIA
Elim
Ezion-geber
Persepolis
RED SEA
Elath
RIVER NILE
Hazeroth
Rephidim
Kibroth-hattaavah
Place of the Encampment
Mt. Horeb
Mt. Sinai
AKABA
PERSIAN GULF
0
100
200
300
400
SCALE OF MILES

THIRD QUARTER

THE CAPTIVITY OF THE JEWS

AIM.—*To teach the folly of disobedience to God, and to understand the fearful consequences that await every act of disobedience to God.*

Lesson I—July 4, 1948

THE NATION UNDER JUDGES

The Lesson Text

Judges 3: 7-14; 4: 1-3; 6: 1; 13: 1

7 And the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl did that which was evil in the sight of Jĕ-hō'văh, and forgat Jĕ-hō'văh their God, and served the Bā'ăl-īm and the Ă-shē'rōth.
8 Therefore the anger of Jĕ-hō'văh was kindled against Ĭs'rā-ĕl, and he sold them into the hand of Cū'shăn-rĭsh-ă-thā'ĭm king of Mĕs-ŏ-pō-tā'mĭ-à: and the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl served Cū'shăn-rĭsh-ă-thā'ĭm eight years.
9 And when the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl cried unto Jĕ-hō'văh, Jĕ-hō'văh raised up a saviour to the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl, who saved them, even Oth'nĭ-ĕl the son of Kē'năz, Cā'lĕb's younger brother.
10 And the Spirit of Jĕ-hō'văh came upon him, and he judged Ĭs'rā-ĕl; and he went out to war, and Jĕ-hō'văh delivered Cū'shăn-rĭsh-ă-thā'ĭm king of Mĕs-ŏ-pō-tā'mĭ-à into his hand: and his hand prevailed against Cū'shăn-rĭsh-ă-thā'ĭm.
11 And the land had rest forty years. And Oth'nĭ-ĕl the son of Kē'năz died.
12 And the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl again did that which was evil in the sight of Jĕ-hō'văh: and Jĕ-hō'văh strengthened Ĕg'lŏn the king of Mō'ăb against Ĭs'rā-ĕl, because they had done that which was evil in the sight of Jĕ-hō'văh.
13 And he gathered unto him the children of Ăm'mŏn and Ăm'ă-lĕk; and he went and smote Ĭs'rā-ĕl, and they possessed the city of palm-trees.
14 And the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl served Ĕg'lŏn the king of Mō'ăb eighteen years.

1 And the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl again did that which was evil in the sight of Jĕ-hō'văh, when Ē'hūd was dead.
2 And Jĕ-hō'văh sold them into the hand of Jā'bĭn king of Cā'năan, that reigned in Hā'zōr; the captain of whose host was Sĭs'ĕ-rà, who dwelt in Hă-rō'shĕth of the Gĕn'tīles.
3 And the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl cried unto Jĕ-hō'văh: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl.

1 And the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl did that which was evil in the sight of Jĕ-hō'văh: and Jĕ-hō'văh delivered them into the hand of Mĭd'ĭ-ăn seven years.

1 And the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl again did that which was evil in the sight of Jĕ-hō'văh; and Jĕ-hō'văh delivered them into the hand of the Phĭ-lĭs'tĭnes forty years.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"*After these things he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet.*" (Acts 13: 20.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Judges 6: 36-40.

Daily Bible Readings

June 28. M.....Inhabitants Left in the Land (Judges 1: 22-36)
June 29. T.....Joshua's Death and Apostasy of the People (Judges 2: 6-22)
June 30. W.....Canaanites Left to Prove Israel (Judges 2: 1-5; 3: 1-6)
July 1. T.....Deliverance Under Ehud (Judges 3: 15-30)
July 2. F.....Deliverance Under Deborah (Judges 4: 4-23)
July 3. S.....Gideon Chosen to Deliver (Judges 6: 11-40)
July 4. S.....Gideon's Victory Over Midian (Judges 7: 1-25)

Lesson Subject Explained

The position held by Moses, whose successor was Joshua, was a new one to the people of Israel. They had long been accustomed to the patriarchal form of government in which the heads of families ruled. If a situation arose which demanded more strength to handle than the father could exercise, he simply called on heads of other families to cooperate with him in handling the affair. When Moses delivered the people from bondage he attempted to handle all matters of government, but soon found it impossible. And at the suggestion of his father-in-law he appointed men as judges to assist him. (Ex. 18.) What connection there was, if any at all, between these and the judges following the time of Joshua, we have no means of knowing. At least their duties were not the same.

Joshua did not look upon his office as belonging to him for life, and then to his sons after him. In fact as soon as a large portion of the land had been taken from the Canaanites, and the allotments made to the various tribes, Joshua settled on his inheritance at Timnath-heres, and spent the balance of his days as a private citizen. There was no central government, no standing army, no lawmaking body, and no law-enforcement body. Of course they had the law of Moses, and many of its penalties were to be executed by the people, and this took care of most of their needs. But there was no provision for raising an army to keep from being overrun by the enemy. "If the country were invaded, each man armed himself as he could, and followed the head of his village, who led his contingent to the rallying place of the clan; perhaps at some point where all the other clans of the same tribe were to meet; but in such hasty gatherings, when those only who chose assembled, there was neither gradation nor rank nor any military order. Force or surprise were the only military conceptions. Each man supplied his own food, or got it by plunder, or by requisition of a band on some town or individual." (Geikie.)

Being in such a state of disorganization the people were largely at the mercy of the powerful tribes left among them, and especially on the outer borders of the land. On the south and east were the Midianites and the Amalekites. The Philistines were on the southwest and the Phoenicians on the west and northwest. "While on the north still lingered formidable remnants of the great confederacy under Jabin." When oppression from some one of these powerful tribes had brought the people to their realization of the need of God, and they were ready to turn from their sins, God would raise up a man to lead them to victory. But when the victory was over, his service was little in demand. He had no governmental function, though his advice might be sought, or he might be called upon to aid in settlement of disputes. His service entitled him to recognition as the first citizen of the country he had served.

It is also worthy of notice that these judges were never over all the land, or all the tribes of Israel. No one enemy tribe ever brought into bondage all the tribes of Israel, so no judge ever delivered the whole land from oppression. And the deliverer was accepted as judge in only that portion of the land he had served as deliverer. "But they were neither hereditary governors, nor were they chosen by the people: they were properly vicegerents or lieutenants of the supreme God; and were always, among the Israelites, chosen by him

VIS-JER-ENT

in a supernatural way. They had no power to make or change laws; they were only to execute them under the direction of the Most High. God, therefore, was king in Israel: the government was a theocracy; and the judges were his deputies. The office, however, was not continual, as there appears intervals in which there was no judge in Israel. And, as they were extraordinary persons, they were only raised up on extraordinary occasions to be the instruments in the hands of God of delivering their nation from the oppression and tyranny of the neighboring powers. They had neither pomp nor state; nor, probably, any kind of emoluments." (Adam Clarke.)

Context of the Lesson

The book of Judges begins by saying, "And it came to pass after the death of Joshua;" but how long after his death we have no way of knowing. The usual guess is that it was not very long. But the people wanted to know who would lead them in their fight against the people of the land whom they were to dispossess. It is significant that God did not appoint a successor to Joshua, much less give them a king. He told Judah to go up against the Canaanites; and Judah asked Simeon to assist. And as long as they asked of God and followed the instructions God gave them, they were victorious; but when they grew tired of battle and became satisfied with what they had gained, and failed to listen to the voice of the Lord, they failed in their mission. The matter is well summed up in the following:

"Now when Joshua had sent the people away, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land. 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. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Jehovah, died, being a hundred and ten years old. 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. 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." (Judges 2: 6-10.)

The Historical Background

TIME.—First section, 1413 to 1343 B.C.; second section, 1305 B.C.; third section, 1252 B.C.; and fourth section, 1157 B.C. The people entered the land in 1451 B.C. Joshua died about 1443 B.C. Saul was anointed first king in 1095 B.C., which leaves three hundred and forty-eight years between the death of Joshua and the crowning of Saul as the time when the judges ruled, or did their work.

PLACES.—First section, City of Palm trees (Near Jericho?); second section, Mount Tabor; third section, Ophrah and Valley of Jezreel; fourth section, Zorah (20 miles west of Jerusalem.)

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Israelites, Othniel, Ehud, Deborah and Barak, Gideon, Samson.

Golden Text Explained

"And after these things." These are the words of Paul in Antioch of Pisidia. He was on his first missionary tour. That they might have a hearing among people who believed in God, they went to the synagogue on the Sabbath. And after the reading of the law and

the prophets, Paul was asked if he had something to say. That was sufficient invitation for him to preach Christ to the people. He reminded them that Jehovah had chosen the fathers, had delivered them from bondage and cared for them forty years in the wilderness; then he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan to give them a land for their inheritance. These are the things he had in mind which transpired before he gave them judges.

"He gave them judges until Samuel the prophet." It was the will of God that the people not have a centralized government; and if they had obeyed his laws there would have been no need for such. God told them to drive out all the inhabitants of the land, and if they would live in harmony with his laws he would see to it that their land was never invaded by the enemy. But they disobeyed God. In the first place they did not drive out all the inhabitants of the land, so left themselves exposed to danger. And their disobedience to God in other ways could not go unpunished, so God allowed their enemies to oppress them. When they needed a deliverer God raised up a man specially qualified for the work. But his position was not for life, and he was not succeeded by his son, or by any one else. This gave no encouragement to graft in affairs of government; it did not minister to pride; and there was no royal court to finance and so no high taxes to burden the people. But when the sins of the people brought enemies upon them, the people realized a need of a continuous ruler who could maintain a standing army for their protection. So they asked for a king. But no one can read the history of the kingdom without being impressed with the fact that the king was as much a curse to Israel as a help. God wished to rule the people, and when they demanded a king, God told Samuel the people had not rejected Samuel, but they had rejected God, and was no longer willing for him to rule over them. (1 Sam. 8: 4-9.) Samuel was the last of the judges, and was a prophet as well; and Saul was the first king.

Helps on the Lesson Text

Mesopotamian oppression. First it should be noticed that this oppression was caused by the disobedience of the people of Israel. Their sins are listed as: (1) They forgot Jehovah. (2) They served other gods. One god was Baal (Baalim, the plural form.) This was the god of the Phoenicians, and a few other Canaanitish tribes. The Asheroth is thought to be the same as Asherah and Ashtoreth and Astarte. This was the female god of the Phoenicians. This was the most prominent form of heathen worship of which the Israelites were guilty. It was this form with which they were defiled before they reached Canaan. (Num. 22.)

For this idolatry God allowed Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia to oppress the people. Of this king and his people little is known. He lived in about the same section of the country where Israel spent seventy years in captivity.

Othniel was raised up as the deliverer from the enemy. The first mention of this man is made in Josh. 15: 17, where he was said to have taken a city for Caleb and was rewarded by being given Caleb's daughter in marriage. Othniel was Caleb's nephew.

Moabite oppression. Within forty years of the time Othniel delivered the people they were in disobedience to Jehovah again so the Lord delivered them into the hands of Eglon the king of Moab. With

the help of the Ammonites and Amalekites Eglon defeated Israel and took possession of the city of palm-trees. Jericho is called the city of palm-trees (Deut. 34: 3), but since Joshua destroyed that city immediately after entering Canaan, and it was not rebuilt until the days of Ahab (1 Kings 16: 34), we may be sure this is not its meaning here. However it is thought to have been a place in that vicinity.

Israel's sin is not revealed this time, though it was very likely idolatry again. For it is said that "Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah."

Ehud, a Benjamite, was raised up this time to deliver the people. By stealth he slew Eglon with a dagger a cubit in length, then called the people together and killed ten thousand of the enemy.

Canaanite oppression. This oppression was under Jabin the king of Hazor. This city was the leading center in all northern Palestine, and too strong to be left by Joshua, so he burnt the city to the ground. But in one hundred and sixty-five years the city is rebuilt and the people are strong enough to oppress the people who had destroyed it. Hazor was a territory near lake Merom, the headwaters of the Jordan River. Sisera was the captain of Jabin's army, and was equipped with nine hundred chariots of iron, which the Israelites feared. (Judges 1: 19.)

Deborah and Barak were chosen as the leaders of the people in their fight for freedom. Barak refused to go unless Deborah would go with him, so forfeited his right to any credit which might come from the victory. Sisera was killed by Jael after she had fed him and given him a place to rest, and his entire army was slain, "not a man left." (Judges 4: 16.)

Midianite oppression. When the land had rest forty years the people went into sin again so that the Lord had to bring another enemy upon them in punishment for their sins. So severe was the oppression that the Israelites had to live in caves and dens in the mountains like wild beasts. This continued for seven years. Then the Lord raised up Gideon as the deliverer, and gave him undoubted proof of his call in a most interesting way. (Judges 6: 36-40.) Gideon then gathered an army of thirty-two thousand men which was reduced to three hundred men so the people would not say, "Mine own hand hath saved me." With these three hundred men divided and equipped with pitchers and lights Gideon confused the enemy and gained the victory.

Philistine oppression. For Israel's sin this time they were delivered into the Philistines' hands for forty years. Samson was raised up to deliver Israel, but he gathered no army. During twenty years (Judges 15: 20) in which he judged Israel he destroyed much property and many of the Philistines. But his love of women hindered him in his work and brought him to shame, and finally rendered him a slave of his enemy. But in this condition he prayed to God for strength to destroy as many of the enemy as were gathered to be entertained by his strength. Though he lost his life in the effort, he destroyed three thousand people on that occasion, which was more than he had destroyed all during his life.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Telling the stories will be the main interest in these departments. Getting the facts fixed in the minds, and drawing helpful lessons from the characters and events will be next in order. The aim of the lessons of this quarter is to teach the folly of disobedience in view of the fearful consequences thereof, so when the story has been told the teacher should see that this lesson is impressed. Repetition will not hurt. The book of Judges is a series of events teaching this lesson over and over. It needs to be repeated.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

These stories of life among the people of God are composed of persons, places, and events; and from the connections of these there may be drawn principles of conduct. So the teacher may plan the lesson in these four divisions. Certainly it is not out of place to see that the students are familiar with biblical geography, and good maps may be used to good advantage in this connection. Special reports on certain persons of this lesson, or about places of unusual interest will add interest and give good training for the young.

Young People and Adult Departments

The suggestions made above as to planning the lesson will be good in these departments. However the thing of principal interest in these departments should be the principles of conduct. And the teacher should remember the aim of the lessons of this quarter to drive home the lesson on the folly of disobedience and the fearful consequences of sin. These dangers do not decrease with age. If there is any difference at all, they increase with age. So many serve faithfully for a while and then become careless, and then downright unfaithful. Israel served the Lord for a while after entering Canaan. If one dies in unfaithfulness, all his former faithfulness will not be remembered in judgment. (Ezek. 18.)

Topics for Discussion

1. The laws of God are made with the happiness of mankind in view. If these laws are respected God will be glorified, man will live a more useful life on earth, and be rewarded with eternal life in the world to come. But if man does not respect God's laws the Lord will be dishonored, man's life will be wasted on earth, and he will be punished eternally in the world to come. These principles are illustrated, as well as stated, hundreds of times in the Bible. Those who are rejected in the judgment will have none but themselves to blame for their failure to go to heaven.

2. Samson's life is a picture of Israel. When he obeyed God, he was strong; but when he disobeyed, he was weak. So Israel was strong enough to overcome the most powerful nation in Canaan as long as they obeyed God; but when they laid their head in the lap of the idols of the heathens God left them and they were at the mercy of their enemies. New Testament writers teach us that Israel's experiences are for our admonition. (1 Cor. 10: 6, 11.)

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you learn from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
With what form of government were the Israelites familiar?
What do you know of judges during the wilderness wanderings?
How long did Joshua keep his position as leader of the people?
Describe political conditions following the death of Joshua.
Can you name and locate the principal enemies of Israel?
By whom were judges appointed, how long did they rule, and how much territory did they rule?
Discuss the context of the lesson.
Discuss the historical background of this lesson.
What form of government did God desire for his people?
What made the appointment of these judges necessary?
Why was it better to have these judges than to have a king?
What acts of disobedience brought on the Mesopotamian oppression, and who delivered them?
What do you know of the Moabite oppression, and who was the deliverer?
Who were the leaders of the Canaanite oppression, and who were the deliverers?
Tell of Gideon's deliverance from the Midianite oppression.
Who was judge during the Philistine oppression, and what do you know of his life?
What contributed most to Samson's downfall?
Are the leaders of God's people still exposed to such dangers?

Lesson II—July 11, 1948

THE UNITED KINGDOM

The Lesson Text

1 Sam. 10: 25-27

25 Then Săm'ū-ĕl told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before Jĕ-hō'văh. And Săm'ū-ĕl sent all the people away, every man to his house.
26 And Saul also went to his house to Ĝĭb'ĕ-ăh; 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.

2 Sam. 8: 13-15

13 And David gat him a name when he returned from smiting the Sȳr'ĭ-ăns in the Valley of Salt, even eighteen thousand men.
14 And he put garrisons in Ĕ'dŏm; throughout all Ĕ'dŏm put he garrisons, and all the Ĕ'dŏm-ĭtes became servants to David. And Jĕ-hō'văh gave victory to David whithersoever he went.
15 And David reigned over all Ĭs'rā-ĕl; and David executed justice and righteousness unto all his people.

1 Kings 10: 23-25

23 So king Sŏl'ŏ-mŏn exceeded all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom.
24 And all the earth sought the presence of Sŏl'ŏ-mŏn, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.
25 And they brought every man his tribute, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, and armor, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"By me kings reign, and princes decree justice."* (Prov. 8: 15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—2 Sam. 7: 8-17.

Daily Bible Readings

July 5. M.....The People Ask for a King (1 Sam. 8: 4-22)
July 6. T.....Saul Anointed First King (1 Sam. 9: 15; 10: 1)
July 7. W.....Samuel's Address About Kings (1 Sam. 12: 1-25)
July 8. T.....David Anointed Second King (1 Sam. 16: 1-13)
July 9. F.....David King of All Israel (2 Sam. 5: 1-5)
July 10. S.....Solomon Anointed Third King (1 Kings 1: 28-40)
July 11. S.....The Sins of Solomon (1 Kings 11: 1-13)

Lesson Subject Explained

"The immediate occasion of the substitution of a regal form of government for that of the judges seems to have been the siege of Jabesh-gilead by Nahash, king of the Ammonites (1 Sam. 11: 1; 12: 12), and the refusal to allow the inhabitants of that city to capitulate, except on humiliating and cruel conditions. (1 Sam. 11: 2, 4-6.) The conviction seems to have forced itself on the Israelites that they could not resist their formidable neighbor unless they placed themselves under the sway of a king, like surrounding nations. Concurrently with this conviction, disgust had been excited by the corrupt administration of justice under the sons of Samuel, and a radical change was desired by them in this respect also. (1 Sam. 8: 3-5.) Accordingly the original idea of a Hebrew king was twofold: first, that he should lead the people to battle in time of war; and, secondly, that he should execute judgment and justice to them in war and in peace. (1 Sam. 8: 20.) In both respects the desired end was attained. The righteous wrath and military capacity of Saul were immediately triumphant over the Ammonites; and though ultimately he was defeated and slain in battle with the Philistines, he put even them to flight on more than one occasion (1 Sam. 14: 23; 17: 52), and generally waged successful war against the surrounding nations (1 Sam. 14: 47.) His successor, David, entered a series of brilliant conquests over the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, Edomites, and Ammonites; and the Israelites, no longer confined within the narrow bounds of Palestine, had an empire extending from the river Euphrates to Gaza, and from the entering in of Hamath to the river of Egypt. (1 Kings 4: 21.) In the meanwhile complaints cease of the corruption of justice; and Solomon not only consolidated and maintained in peace the empire of his father, David, but left an enduring reputation for his wisdom as a judge. Under this expression, however, we must regard him, not merely as pronouncing decisions, primarily, or in the last resort, in civil and criminal cases, but likewise as holding public levees and transacting public business 'at the gate,' when he would receive petitions, hear complaints, and give summary decisions on various points, which in a modern European kingdom would come under the cognizance of numerous distinct departments." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary.*)

Context of the Lesson

In the context of the first section of our lesson we find the people complaining of the corruption of the sons of Samuel in the administration of affairs, and asking that they be given a king like the nations

round about them. Samuel was very much hurt that the people would turn him down in his old age, but the Lord comforted him by telling him that the people were not rejecting him, but they were rejecting God from being their ruler. Then God gave Samuel a message for the people as what a king would do for them. He would take their sons as soldiers, and as servants; he would take their daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers: he would take their fields, vineyards, and oliveyards; he would take a tenth of the produce of the land and of their flocks; and they would cry out for relief from the burdens of their king, but God would not hear them. But in spite of all these warnings they still wanted a king, and Jehovah said to Samuel, "Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king." And then follows the record of the anointing of Saul as the first king of Israel.

In the context of the second section of our lesson we learn of David's desire to build a house of the Lord. David was not willing to dwell in a house of cedar while his Lord dwelt in a tent. The Lord was pleased with David's attitude and revealed things to come with reference to the house of David for many generations to come; but yet the Lord was not willing that David be the builder of the temple because he had shed much blood. (1 Chron. 28: 2, 3.) Then follows a list of the nations David conquered, extending the borders of the kingdom to include Moab, the territory east to the Euphrates River, and Damascus, the country of the Ammonites, and the Philistines, and the Amalekites.

In the context of the third section of our lesson we have the building of the temple by Solomon, and its dedication service, and the covenant God made with Solomon, which is worthy of a place in these lessons which have as their aim to teach us the folly of disobedience and the fearful consequences of sin. "And Jehovah said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually. And as for thee, if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and mine ordinances; then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom over Israel for ever, according as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. But if ye shall turn away from following me, ye or your children, and not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but shall go and serve other gods, and worship them; then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all peoples. And though this house is so high, yet shall every one that passeth by it be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath Jehovah done this unto this land, and to this house? and they shall answer, Because they forsook Jehovah their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath Jehovah brought all this evil upon them." (1 Kings 9: 3-9.)

The Historical Background

TIME.—First section, 1095 B.C.; second section, 1040 B.C.; third section, 1015 to 975 B.C., which covers the reign of Solomon.

PLACES.—First section, Mizpah, in the vicinity of Ramah and Gibeon; second section, Jerusalem; third section, Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon, and the Israelites.

Golden Text Explained

"By me kings reign, and princes decree justice." By referring back to verses 1 and 12 it will be seen that the speaker in our text is wisdom. "I wisdom have made prudence my dwelling, . . . counsel is mine, and sound knowledge: I am understanding; I have might." These are the verses immediately before our text. On this paragraph Matthew Henry gives a very good outline, as follows: 1. *Divine wisdom gives men good heads,* verse 12. Under this he discusses the knowledge and prudence men have who listen to Jehovah; it is the wise man who hears and does the will of the Lord; it is he who builds on the rock. (Matt. 7: 24.) II. *Divine wisdom gives men good hearts,* verse 13. A heart that hates evil and loves the good of this life is the heart with affections set on heavenly things, and not on the things of this world; and that is the heart most prepared for heaven. III. *Divine wisdom has a wholesome influence on public affairs,* verses 14, 15. The best and safest counsel comes from the Lord. And it is in harmony with this divine counsel that kings reign best, and princes rule most wisely. Force may extend the borders of a kingdom, but it cannot long hold the hearts of the people. IV. *Divine wisdom makes all happy who embrace it,* verse 17. Much happiness in this life may be realized by walking in wisdom's way, and an eternity of true happiness may be surely had in the next world by so walking.

This is a lesson which rulers of the world need so much today. They are searching for ways to bring about peace. Conferences are being held by the highest representatives of the nations to determine ways for permanent peace. But until the people of this world get ready to turn to God there will be no such thing as peace. Yet not one of the rulers has suggested that the nations turn to God and follow the ways of wisdom to learn peace and promote righteousness upon the earth. They are placing their faith in treaties, the works of men, and armed might to enforce these agreements among the nations.

Helps on the Lesson Text

The manner of the kingdom. This writing of Samuel has not been preserved, but this expression must refer to the manner in which the affairs of the kingdom were to be conducted. It very likely pointed out the dangers to be avoided, the duties of the king to his subjects, and the duties of subjects to their king.

Whose hearts God had touched. This is said of the host, band of men, who went home with Saul. By the host some say all who were capable of bearing arms, but this surely is not true, as accommodations were not sufficient, nor did Saul immediately enter upon his duties as king, but went back to his farming. They were select friends whom the providence of God moved to be the advisers and helpers of Saul.

They despised him, and brought him no present. This is said of certain worthless fellows, who, likely, were not among the chosen counselors of Saul. Had they been chosen, they would have considered Saul a great man and worthy of the respect of all men. Some of their tribe are in the church today. Kings drew no fixed salary; they lived of the gifts of the people, later taxing the people. These worthless fellows refused to support the king.

And David gat him a name. This means that David earned a good reputation as a leader of his people.

In the Valley of Salt. This is "supposed to have been in the land of Edom, east of the Dead Sea, between Tadmore and Bozrah. Here both David and Amaziah discomfited the Edomites." (Horne.)

And David executed justice and righteousness unto all his people. "He did justice with an unbiased, unshaken hand; neither did wrong, nor denied or delayed right to any. It bespeaks his industry, and close application to business; also his impartiality and equity; he never perverted justice for favor or affection, nor had respect of persons, in judgment. . . . He kept good order, and good officers, in his court . . . They were ready to serve at home, to assist in administering justice, and to preserve the public peace." (M. Henry.)

King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth in riches. Solomon had an annual income of six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold. Horne says a talent of gold is worth five thousand four hundred and seventy-five English pounds, and at $4.86 per pound, we arrive at the figure of nearly eighteen million dollars. Besides that he had an income from traders, merchants, kings, and governors. It is said that silver was as common in Jerusalem as stones. (1 Kings 10: 14, 15, 27.)

God put wisdom in his heart. Men of many nations sought out Solomon to hear his wisdom. God gave Solomon more wisdom than has ever been given to any other human being. He was recognized as wiser than the men of the East in his day. He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand five. His wisdom was not simply in one line of learning, but in many. (1 Kings 4: 29-34.)

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

The chief interest in these departments will be in the stories connected with the lesson, and good stories of interest abound in our lesson material. The children in these departments will not be interested in the development of the kingdom, but they will be interested in the men connected with that development. So if it is necessary to go outside the lesson texts to develop these life stories, it will be worth while to do so.

It should also be kept in mind that the aim of the lessons of this quarter is to teach us the folly of disobedience to God, and the fearful consequence of sin. Few lessons will furnish more or better material than this one for the illustration of these great truths. Though Saul was humble when he was made king, he became proud, self-willed, and rebellious, and died a suicide after his army had been defeated. David was a good man in most respects, yet he committed a grievous sin which hurt him with his people and brought him grief as long as he lived. Solomon's wisdom was sufficient to acquaint him with

the consequences of sin, but his lust for sensual pleasures led him astray. He finally became an idolater, and, according to some, died in that condition.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

In these departments ambitions are cultivated. These are the years when they dream of what they wish most to be. All three of these kings were great from the world's viewpoint. David proved himself to be a great man in spite of his sin. His greatness lay in the fact that he was deeply grieved on account of his sin and truly repented. He was submissive to God. Both Saul and Solomon cared so little for the will of God that they were not grieved on account of their sins, nor did they repent. This age is characterized by a disregard for the will of the Lord. People do not care what God says about the right and wrong of matters. When considering doing a thing it never occurs to them to inquire as to the will of God on the matter. In guiding these young people in forming and realizing their ambitions, it is the teacher's privilege and responsibility to help them form a high estimate of the value of, and regard for, the will of the Lord. Lead them to see that great learning, great wealth, and great social and political power are of no eternal value. And unless these things can be used for the glory of God, they may be our eternal ruin.

Young People and Adult Departments

The danger of failure is not passed when people get to the age of these departments; the danger of slipping back into sin is not passed. Both Saul and Solomon were of age when they turned their back upon God. They had both given several years of service to the Lord before they gave way to their desires for worldliness. They had good background in well-ordered homes formed by pious parents. They had families dependent upon them and whose honor they were bound to consider. But in spite of all these checks to sin, they drifted away from God and duty. So it is never too late to be watchful; the time will never come in our lives when we can say we are beyond the danger of apostasy. Wealth and power are the things people seek after more, perhaps, than anything else; but even the wisdom of Solomon did not keep him from misusing both his wealth and power. How can we be sure that without limited wisdom we would make proper use of great wealth and power? It is better to desire to know the will of God, and be submissive to his will. If the teacher can get this lesson over, the time will have been well spent.

Topics for Discussion

1. Worldly possessions multiply cares and temptations, and usually undermine and destroy humility and heavenly-mindedness; they eat out the life of religion by leading to sensual indulgence, avarice, ostentation, or the pride of life.

2. Spiritual peace and riches and abundance of spiritual blessings satisfy, but never satiate; they sanctify, but never soil the soul; they strengthen the soul never weaken it, in times of temptation; they fortify the soul and help to mortify the lusts of the flesh. Which do you prefer, earthly riches or spiritual wealth?

3. Some worthless fellows despised Saul when he was made king. So there are some today who despise the elders of the church and

refuse to give them any cooperation. They are usually men who wish to be elders, but who have not the love of God and determination to live in such way as to merit the confidence of the church. We may well beware of any man who never has a good word for the elders of a church, but who is free to criticize.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you learn from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
What conditions in Israel suggested the need of a king?
Did the appointment of kings solve these problems?
Did the evils attendant to kings outweigh the good which they gained?
How did Samuel feel about the request for a king?
What did Samuel tell the people a king would do for them?
What did David plan to build for the Lord, and why did he not do it?
Discuss the covenant God made with Solomon. (1 Kings 9: 3-9.)
What are the dates connected with this lesson? Places?
Who is the speaker in the Golden Text?
What four things does wisdom do for people?
In what way do you think this lesson applicable to world rulers today?
What did Samuel write concerning the manner of the kingdom?
What attitudes did various people have towards king Saul?
Where was the valley of salt, and what happened there?
What is said of the way David ruled his people?
What is said of the wealth of Solomon, and what of his wisdom?
Were wealth and wisdom a help or a hindrance to Solomon?
How do these three kings illustrate the aim of the lesson of this quarter?

Lesson III—July 18, 1948

THE KINGDOM DIVIDED

The Lesson Text

I Kings 12: 12-20

12 So Jĕr-ŏ-bō'ăm and all the people came to Rē-hŏ-bō'ăm the third day, as
the king bade, saying, Come to me again the third day.
13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the counsel of
the old men which they had given him,
14 And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father
made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you
with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.
15 So the king hearkened not unto the people; for it was a thing brought
about of Jē-hō'văh, that he might establish his word, which Jē-hō'văh spake
by Ă-hī'jăh the Shī'lō-nīte to Jĕr-ŏ-bō'ăm the son of Nē'băt.
16 And when all Ĭs'rā-ĕl saw that the king hearkened not unto them the
people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither
have we inheritance in the son of Jĕs'sē: to your tents, O Ĭs'rā-ĕl: now see to
thine own house, David. So Ĭs'rā-ĕl departed unto their tents.
17 But as for the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl that dwelt in the cities of Jū'dăh,
Rē-hŏ-bō'ăm reigned over them.
18 Then King Rē-hŏ-bō'ăm sent Ă-dō'răm, who was over the men subject to
taskwork; and all Ĭs'rā-ĕl stoned him to death with stones. And king Rē-hŏ-
bō'ăm made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jē-ru'sā-lĕm.
19 So Ĭs'rā-ĕl rebelled against the house of David unto this day.

20 And it came to pass, when all Is'rā-ĕl heard that Jĕr-ō-bō'ăm was returned, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Is'rā-ĕl: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Jū'dăh only.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"If a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand."* (Mark 3: 24.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Kings 12: 1-5.

Daily Bible Readings

July 12. M..... Division of Kingdom Foretold (1 Kings 11: 1-13)
July 13. T.....Jeroboam Promised Ten Tribes (1 Kings 11: 26-40)
July 14. W..... Jeroboam Worshiped Idols (1 Kings 12: 25-33)
July 15. T.....Jeroboam Punished for Wickedness (1 Kings 14: 1-18)
July 16. F.....Rehoboam Held Three Tribes (2 Chron. 11: 1-17)
July 17. S.....Rehoboam Forsook God (2 Chron. 12: 1-14)
July 18. S.....Judah Defeated Israel (2 Chron. 13: 1-22)

Lesson Subject Explained

The predictions which Samuel made concerning the king for which the people asked were fulfilled, many of them, in the lifetime of some of the people who heard Samuel. And these abuses contributed to the division of the kingdom into two warring factions. But this division seemed to be the Lord's way of saving the people from the despotism which characterized every monarch of the eastern world of that time. DES-Pet-15M

Solomon had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines who had to be kept at public expense, together with the hundreds of servants who attended them. "To maintain such a harem as had been created, with its army of attendants; such numberless officials of all grades as the magnificence of the court demanded: such personal expenditure as the imperial tastes of Solomon involved, was to enslave the country for the glory of an individual." (Geikie.) In addition to this vast sums were expended on royal palaces on the grandest scale the wisdom of Solomon could devise. And when it is considered that the peop'e of Israel were unused to taxation, it can be seen at once that such practice on the part of the king would be to invite criticism and schism. 512M

Another thing which contributed to the downfall of Solomon's throne was the forced labor measures he instituted. At first, and all through David's reign, only the remnant of Canaanites were enslaved to carry on public works. But Solomon had so much public work going at once that he had to enslave thousands of the Israelites. At one time there were more than one hundred and fifty thousand men giving part time without pay to carry on the work. And much of this work was for the glory of the king only. (1 Kings 5: 13-18.) But after getting all he could in this way he still had to depend on Hiram of Tyre to furnish much money and labor, so much that Solomon was obligated to give Hiram twenty cities. (1 Kings 9: 11.)

Solomon did not feel the need of prophets as did David before him. Hence the prophets had very little to say in the affairs of the kingdom during Solomon's reign. But when Solomon began to build temples for the gods of his foreign wives, and when he began to take part in that idol worship himself, such prophets as Ahijah, Shemaiah, and Iddo (2 Chron. 9: 29) began to speak out. And since the people

were so dissatisfied with the taxes and forced labor, they would be eager to listen to criticism of the king.

"Unfortunately, there seemed no alternative but revolution. It was soon to be shown that royal pride had risen above all considerations of prudence, and would grant no reforms—a result which the prophets seem instinctively to have foreseen. The old tribal jealousies, moreover, had been rekindled by the favor shown to Judah, and the burdens laid on Ephraim, always its haughty and fierce rival, but now justly incensed. The splendor and wealth of Jerusalem, its palaces, and, above all, its temple, awakened bitter feelings. . . . The change from Saul to David had formerly been of signal advantage; might not another be as great an advancement compared with Solomon? Terms might be dictated to a new king. He might be pledged to maintain the ancient liberties of the people, and to honor Jehovah alone; and the prophets might once more work with him in trying to realize the ideal of the theocracy." (Geikie.)

Context of the Lesson

In the context of our lesson we have a record of the shameful departure of Solomon from the true worship of Jehovah to the degrading abominations of the Sidonians and the Ammonites. (1 Kings 11: 4, 5.) We also have the record of three adversaries which Jehovah raised up in the days of Solomon, Hadad, Rezon, and Jeroboam. Jeroboam was of the powerful tribe of Ephraim (1 Kings 11: 28,) and had a desire to take the whole kingdom, as is intimated in what the prophet Ahijah said to him, "And thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth." (1 Kings 11: 37.) But God gave Jeroboam to understand that he could not have all the kingdom, that a small part of it would be left in the hands of the descendants of David, not for Solomon's sake, but for the sake of the oath God made to David.

Since the aim of the lessons of this quarter is to teach the folly of disobedience, it will be worth while to notice that God gave Jeroboam the kingdom of Israel, and he could have had the throne in his family until the coming of Christ if he had obeyed God. "And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that which is right in mine eyes, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and will build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee." (1 Kings 11: 38.) But Jeroboam disobeyed God, and for this disobedience God said, "Behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every man-child, him that is shut up and him that is left at large in Israel, and will utterly sweep away the house of Jeroboam, as a man sweepeth away dung, till it be all gone. Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the birds of the heavens eat: for Jehovah hath spoken it." (1 Kings 14: 10, 11.) And such is the fearful consequence of disobeying the commandments of Jehovah, whether in the days of Jeroboam or in our day.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date of this lesson is 975 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Rehoboam, Jeroboam, and the people of Israel.

Golden Text Explained

The words of our Golden Text are contained in the answer which Jesus gave to the charge made by the scribes that he was casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of the demons. It seems that they were no longer able to deny the fact that Jesus was actually casting out demons, so they, while admitting that he cast them out, charged that he was in league with Satan and was casting demons out by the power of the prince of demons. It is further evident that they made this charge in an effort to keep people from believing in Jesus. Such miracles were for the purpose of causing people to believe in him that they might be saved. (John 20: 30, 31.) That demons had actually been cast out the scribes were forced to admit, but if they allowed the people to think Jesus cast them out by the power of God, it would be evident that the kingdom had come unto them. (Luke 11: 20.) This conclusion the scribes were determined the people should never reach. So they made the absurd charge that Jesus was casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub. It was a poor argument, but it might confuse the peop e and keep them from believing on Jesus; and that was the design and hope of the scribes. It was a mean contemptible trick, a sin against light both within and without, and for the purpose of destroying souls. And those mean enough to resort to such unprincipled trickery are "guilty of an eternal sin." (Mark 3: 29.)

In answering their charge Jesus said that if a kingdom is divided against itself it cannot stand. His conclusion was that Satan is not foolish enough to cast out Satan. Israel is a good illustration of the truth of this principle. Abuse of power on one hand and envy on the other caused the kingdom to divide at the death of Solomon. Then for sixty years Judah and Israel were continually fighting each other. Then followed a period of thirty-four years of alliance between the two and against a common enemy. But following that they were at war with each other, and both began a rapid decline. The kingdom of Israel lasted on two hundred and fifty-four years before being taken into captivity never to return. The kingdom of Judah managed to exist three hundred and eighty-seven years, one hundred and thirty-three years longer than Israel, before being taken into Babylonian captivity for a period of seventy years. Truly a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.

Churches need to keep this principle in mind. Division within is much more destructive than opposition from without. And it is a sad commentary on humanity that we human beings will put forth a greater effort to make a faction succeed, when division occurs, than we had previously put forth to make the church succeed. Division, and our efforts to keep alive factions, puts the church to shame in the community, and does more to make unbelievers than any other one thing.

Families should remember that a house divided against itself cannot stand. The increasing rate of divorces in America is alarming. One out of every three marriages fail. One third of the homes in the nation fall because of being divided against themselves. The unity of the home must be preserved at any cost short of compromise of the truth and of forsaking the Lord.

Helps on the Lesson Text

And the king answered the people roughly. It was the custom of eastern despots to rule without mercy or consideration for the personal welfare of individual subjects. Rehoboam would have done well on this occasion to have remembered the words of his father, "A wrathful man stirreth up contention; but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife." (Prov. 15: 18.) Or, "It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness; for the throne is established by righteousness." (Prov. 16: 12.) Or, "Kindness and truth preserve the king; and his throne is upholden by kindness." (Prov. 20: 28.) But instead of being kind to his subjects and giving their petitions favorable consideration, he spoke to them roughly.

Forsook the counsel of the old men. In the context of this paragraph we learn that when the people came to Rehoboam to ask that he lighten their taxes he asked three days to consider the matter. During those three days he called in the old men who were the associates of his father, and they advised him to listen to the people and grant their request. Then he called in the young men of his age, and they advised him to make the burdens of the people heavier if any change at all was made. It has ever been the sin of youth that they will not listen to age and experience. "A wise son heareth his father's instruction." And, "The hoary head is a crown of glory; it shall be found in the way of righteousness." (Prov. 16: 31.) Many mistakes and much suffering could be averted today if young people would listen to their parents and others who have traveled the way they are about to go.

I will chastise you with scorpions. There is some uncertainty as to the meaning of scorpions here, but Rehoboam undoubtedly meant that he would be harder on the people than his father had been.

For it was a thing brought about of Jehovah. This division of the kingdom was of God. (1 Kings 11: 9-13, 31-33.) Yet God did not force Rehoboam to take the advice of the young men. Jesus was crucified by the "determinate counsel and foreknowledge" of God (Acts 2: 23,) yet he did not force Judas to betray Christ, neither did he force Pilate to condemn him. The Jews had one purpose in the crucifixion of Christ, and God had another. So in the division of the kingdom. From one point of view it was a perfectly normal and natural thing; but from God's point of view it was a punishment of the sins of Solomon and his effort to save the people from the despotism and idolatry which characterized nations of that day.

What portion have we in David? This was the battle cry of the ten tribes who were intent on being free from the despotism of the tribe of Judah. The word David is here put for Judah. Rehoboam claimed his right to rule because he was of the seed of David of the tribe of Judah.

Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram. This man was "over the tribute," according to the Authorized Version. Rehoboam sent him to collect tribute as if no rebellion had occurred. It was a test of the intentions of the people. He soon found that they meant business, for they stoned Adoram, and Rehoboam fled for his life. A. Clarke says this was a stupid act on the part of Rehoboam, but he had to have some way to determine whether the ten tribes meant to go through with the rebellion. This was a costly, but effective way.

Jeroboam was made king over all Israel. Jeroboam was in Egypt when Solomon died, but he had heard of the death of Solomon and of the efforts of the people to correct some of the abuses under which they lived. So he had returned (2 Chron. 10: 1-5,) no doubt on account of what the prophet Ahijah had told him during the lifetime of Solomon, that he was to be given ten tribes of Israel over which to rule. (1 Kings 11: 30-37.)

None that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only. But in the next verse we learn that the tribe of Benjamin stayed with Judah. This is usually explained by the fact that the two tribes are frequently spoken of as one. And the Levites generally took sides with Judah on account of the temple worship. (2 Chron. 11: 13-17.)

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

There is a similarity about all these lessons in that they have characters who were disobedient to God, and always there was punishment to follow that disobedience. These departments will be interested in learning the stories connected with the persons of the lessons, and the lesson of the consequences of disobedience can be appreciated by them. The fact that these things happened to people of Old Testament times should not lead us to think the principle will be different in our day. New Testament writers used men and events of the Old Testament to teach us such lessons, and Paul says these things were written for our admonition. So by using these characters to teach children to fear sin and disobedience to God, you will be using them for the very purpose for which they were given. And no better use can be made of them, nor can the time be used to better advantage.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

These young people should be taught that this is another step in the progress of events in the plan and purpose of God. We started with Abraham as the father of the nation. We have seen his descendants form into tribes; we saw the tribes form a nation at Sinai; we saw them under judges with no kings to abuse and oppress them; we saw them demand a king like the nations around them; we saw kings abuse and oppress them just as Samuel said they would do; and now we have seen the nation divide because the people would no longer submit to the oppression. They are suffering for their own folly, but to remind them that it was so would bring no relief from their intolerable condition. They were suffering for their disobedience too.

Young People and Adult Departments

Rehoboam could hardly be expected to be a very good man, for his father before him was everything but a devout pious man. He not only suffered on account of his sins, but his son suffered because Solomon did not set the right example before him. Teachers have a fine opportunity to drive home a lesson of parental responsibility in this lesson, as well as the lesson of the terrible consequences of sin common to all these lessons.

Topics for Discussion

1. Can you reconcile God's foreknowledge of the division of the kingdom and his purpose in that division with the fact that the men connected with the division bore the blame for it and suffered the consequences of it?

2. Men in power are liable to cultivate speaking roughly to those under them. Rehoboam lost ten tribes by his rough speech. Preachers, teachers, and elders may be guilty of this sin if they do not exercise caution. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." (Prov. 16: 18.)

3. Newly won power is often rashly exercised; such was the case of Israel stoning Adoram who was sent by king Rehoboam on a mission to Israel.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What lesson did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
Name and discuss three things which contributed to the division of the kingdom.
Did Solomon have less need for the counsel of prophets than David?
What were the outstanding sins of Solomon?
What adversaries were raised up against him?
On what conditions did God promise a kingdom to Jeroboam?
What were the consequences of his disobedience?
Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.
Discuss the setting of our Golden Text.
Show how the kingdom of Israel illustrates the truth of our text.
What application can you make of our text to churches, and to families?
What is the first sin of Rehoboam mentioned in our lesson?
What unwise step did he take in the matter of counsel?
Did Jehovah favor the division of the kingdom? Why?
How many tribes went with Jeroboam? How many with Rehoboam?
What do you think of Solomon's ability to bring up a child in the way he should go?
Does the fact that Solomon failed to train his son destroy the truth of the rule? (Prov. 22: 6.)

Lesson IV—July 25, 1948

THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

The Lesson Text

1 Kings 12: 25-33; 19: 15-18

25 Then Jĕr-ŏ-bō'ăm built Shē'chĕm in the hill-country of Ĕ'phrā-ĭm, and dwelt therein; and he went out from thence, and built Pĕ-nū'ĕl.
26 And Jĕr-ŏ-bō'ăm said in his heart, Now will the kingdom return to the house of David:
27 If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of Jĕ-hō'văh at Jĕ-ru'sā-lĕm, then will the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rĕ-hō-bō'ăm king of Jū'dăh; and they will kill me, and return to Rĕ-hō-bō'ăm king of Jū'dăh.
28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold; and he said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jĕ-ru'sā-lĕm: behold thy gods, O Ĭs'rā-ĕl, which brought thee up out of the land of Ĕ'gypt.
29 And he set the one in Bĕth'ĕl, and the other put he in Dan.

30 And this thing became a sin; for the people went *to worship* before the one, even unto Dan.
31 And he made houses of high places, and made priests from among all the people, that were not of the sons of Lē'vi.
32 And Jĕr-ō-bō'ăm ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Jū'dăh, and he went up unto the altar; so did he in Bĕth'ĕl, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bĕth'ĕl the priests of the high places that he had made.
33 And he went up unto the altar which he had made in Bĕth'ĕl on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart: and he ordained a feast for the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl, and went up unto the altar, to burn incense.

15 And Jē-hō'văh said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Dă-măs'cŭs: and when thou comest, thou shalt anoint Hăz'ā-ĕl to be king over Sȳr'ĭ-ā;
16 And Jē'hū the son of Nĭm'shī shalt thou anoint to be king over Ĭs'rā-ĕl; and Ĕ-lī'shā the son of Shā'phăt of Ā'bĕl-me-hō'lăh shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.
17 And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth from the sword of Hăz'ā-ĕl shall Jē'hū slay; and him that escapeth from the sword of Jē'hū shall Ĕ-lī'shā slay.
18 Yet will I leave me seven thousand in Ĭs'rā-ĕl, all the knees which have not bowed unto Bā'ăl, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people."* (Prov. 14: 34.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—2 Kings 11: 1-3.

Daily Bible Readings

July 19. M.....Jeroboam Rebuked for Idolatry (1 Kings 13: 1-10)
July 20. T.....Disobedience of the Prophet (1 Kings 13: 11-32)
July 21. W.....Reasons for Israel's Captivity (2 Kings 17: 1-23)
July 22. T.....Israel Mixed With Assyria (2 Kings 17: 24-41)
July 23. F.....Josiah Destroyed Jeroboam's Altar (2 Kings 23: 15-20)
July 24. S.....Jeroboam's House Destroyed (1 Kings 15: 25-34)
July 25. S.....Extent of Jeroboam's Evil Influence (2 Kings 23: 15-20)

Lesson Subject Explained

The word Israel was used first in the Bible when the Lord gave Jacob a new name. (Gen. 32: 28.) The term, kingdom of Israel, was used with reference to the kingdom before the division. Saul, David, and Solomon reigned over Israel. Jerusalem was the capital city of Israel. But when the division came, the term Israel went with the ten tribes, and from that time forward the northern kingdom wore the name of Israel, and the southern kingdom was known as the kingdom of Judah. Jerusalem remained the capital of the southern kingdom and Shechem became the first city of the northern kingdom.

"For the moment it must have seemed as if the house of David had lost everything. The sceptre left it was that only of a single tribe, with insignificant dependencies. From almost within sight of Jerusalem on the north, to the valley of the Orontes; from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, all else had passed into the hands of one whom Solomon had first raised from obscurity. Judah, Rehoboam's own tribe, on its barren hills, alone remained faithful to him. The boundaries of the tribes generally had, in the course of ages become more or less changed. Jerusalem stood on the territory of Benjamin, and its population belonged in great measure to that tribe. The southern part of it, therefore, adhered to Judah, as far as Mizpeh and Geba; but the northern half, including the ancient and revered sanctuaries of Bethel, Ramah, Gilgal, and Jericho, remained, as heretofore, connected with the fortunes of Ephraim. Judah had already

absorbed some part of Dan, for the villages of Zorah and Ajalon were reckoned hers, and thus a fragment of the territory of that tribe also, remained under Rehoboam. But the town of Dan in the far north was the capital of the tribe, and most of the clan would doubtless follow it in its adhesion to the northern confederacy. . . . While the territory of Rehoboam could thus take the name of only one tribe, the northern confederacy, on the other hand, might well assume the proud title of 'Israel,' the father of the whole race, and boast that it was, in effect, the national kingdom. The claim was indeed virtually acknowledged by the general use of this lordly name henceforth. It was not applied to Judah till after the destruction of Samaria, but from the first, even the prophets thus designated the northern kingdom." (Geikie.)

According to Smith's *Bible Dictionary* the kingdom of Israel had an area of nine thousand three hundred and seventy-five square miles, while the kingdom of Judah had only three thousand four hundred and thirty-five square miles of territory. But even these figures do not give a true picture, for the land in Judah was the poorest in Palestine generally, and the richest valleys and best farming land were in Israel. If Jeroboam had been as wise as he was anxious to rule he could have built a kingdom far superior to that of Judah in almost every way. Territory, population, fertility of soil, cities hallowed by memories of the past, all of these and more combined to make the kingdom of Israel stronger than Judah, and greater in the eyes of the nations round about.

Context of the Lesson

A review of last week's lesson will serve very well for the context of this lesson, as the two are so close together.

But there is one item of interest not contained in either lesson text. While Rehoboam was still in Shechem for the consideration of matters brought to his attention by the people, and the ten tribes had pulled off, Adoram, Rehoboam's representative, was killed. This was sufficient evidence to Rehoboam that the people were determined to rebel and set up another kingdom. So he fled back to Jerusalem. Immediately Rehoboam moved to put down the rebellion. He gathered one hundred and eighty thousand men, seasoned soldiers, to move on the ten tribes and bring them back into submission to his rule. This was the human thing to do, and nothing else could be expected of a king. However it was not God's will for it to be done, and he sent his prophet, Shemaiah, to tell Rehoboam, "Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: . . . for this thing is of me." And to the word of the prophet Rehoboam and his people hearkened, thus saving much shedding of blood for the time being at least.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date of this lesson is 975 B.C.
PLACES.—Shechem, Penuel, Bethel, and Dan.
PERSONS.—Jehovah, Jeroboam, and Rehoboam.

Golden Text Explained

"Righteousness exalteth a nation." David said all the commandments of God are righteousness. (Ps. 119: 172.) So to obey God's

commandments is to work his righteousness. We may arrive at this conclusion by putting two familiar verses of scripture together. The wise man said the whole duty of man is to fear God and keep his commandments. (Eccles. 12: 13.) Peter said he is acceptable to God who fears God and works righteousness. (Acts 10: 34.) In each of these verses we find it our duty to fear God. But in one, in addition to fearing God, we are told to keep his commandments; while in the other we are told to work righteousness. We therefore conclude that to keep God's commandments is to work his righteousness. And he that doeth righteousness is righteous. (1 John 3: 7.) So the one who obeys God is the righteous man. It is this type of man that exalteth a nation. Obeying the laws of the nation is one way of exalting the nation. A nation filled with criminals, men who pay no regard to the laws, dishonor their nation. And soon they bring the nation into ill repute abroad.

Righteousness exalts a nation in the eyes of God. The Lord has a high regard for a nation of good obedient people. Over and over he told Israel that he would be delighted in them if they would be obedient to him; but in the day when they turned their backs to him and went after other gods, in that day he would be against them and bring evil upon them. This we have seen to be the truth in his dealings with Israel.

Righteousness exalts a nation in the eyes of men. In our generation we have seen nations committed to evil, and bent upon doing that which outraged the sense of justice of the civilized world. On the other hand we have seen nations go to war in the interest of the freedom of weak nations. Men with a sense of justice detest the former and praise the latter. That which exalts a nation, which is composed of individuals, is bound to exalt the individual both in the eyes of God and of other people.

"Sin is a reproach to any people." Sin is degrading to him who engages in it. It robs one of his self-respect, as well as of the respect of God and man. There is no justification for continued sin, for following a sinful course, hence the reproach of sin.

Sin is a reproach because it is a crime against our maker, preserver, and judge. We should not sin against our maker and preserver because it shows a lack of appreciation and gratitude; it is biting the hand that feeds; it is betraying the best friend we have. And it is a senseless thing to sin against our judge. To treat with contempt the judge on the bench in whose hands our life is held would be very unwise; but that does not compare with the senselessness of treating with contempt the judge of all the earth in whose hands is held our eternal destiny.

Sin is a reproach because it is a crime against man himself. No one can sin without injuring himself. Sin is a prostitution of God-given ability. God gives us good minds and vigorous bodies and expects us to use them for him. When we sin, we use these gifts from God for the devil. This is unwise and even dishonorable. Such a course robs one of self-respect, of his influence for good in the world, and his hope for heaven. Sin is the leprosy of the soul, and renders one unfit to remain in the camp of the saints, much less in the company of the redeemed in glory.

Helps on the Lesson Text

Then Jeroboam built Shechem. This can hardly mean that he founded the city, for Shechem was at that time an old city. It was the first stop of Abraham in the land in 1921 B.C. (Gen. 12: 6.) And it is quite prominent in Israelitish affairs all through the ages. So we gather that Jeroboam enlarged and fortified it and established his capital there.

He went out from thence, and built Penuel. This is a city on the east side of Jordan. It was formerly known as Peniel. Gen. 32: 30, 31.) It was there that Jacob wrestled with the Lord all night to obtain a blessing, and where his name was changed to Israel. It was a city with a tower in the days of Gideon. (Judges 8: 17.) Jeroboam fortified this city because of its strategic location "commanding the fords of Succoth and the road from the east of Jordan to his capital city of Shechem," and perhaps on account of it having been an ancient sanctuary.

Now will the kingdom return to the house of David. This was the fear of Jeroboam if he allowed them to go back to Jerusalem three times a year to worship. Jeroboam knew that fellowship in worship would break down national enmities. It will also break down family and community enmities. Sincere people cannot pray and sing together without loving each other and laying aside their differences.

It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Though the people had gone up to Jerusalem for several generations, suddenly it had become a great burden! And it seems the people believed him. People are always looking for an easier religion. It is too much to be immersed, just have a few drops of water sprinkled on you! This is the philosophy of Jeroboam, but it is still popular. It is too much to go to worship both Sunday morning and Sunday night, so the supper is spread at both times and you may run in at either service! And this is the philosophy of Jeroboam that is popular with too many brethren.

Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. These are the very words Aaron used when he made the golden calf, and asked the people to worship it. (Ex. 32: 4, 8.) Did these people not know the history of Aaron's calf, and God's displeasure on account of it? Could people who had worshiped God in the temple think idols brought their fathers out of bondage? No doubt Solomon's idolatry prepared the way for this. Jeroboam put one place of worship in Dan, the extreme north, and the other in Bethel, the extreme south portion of his kingdom. Bethel was only twelve miles from Jerusalem.

He made priests from among all the people, that were not of the sons of Levi. This may have been because the priests refused to offer sacrifices before the idols, and if so the guilt of the people is aggravated even more in accepting that which their priests refused to acknowledge as right.

Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month. This feast he patterned after the annual feasts at Jerusalem. Here we see that (1) the object of worship is changed; (2) the time is changed; (3) the place of worship is changed; and (4) the manner of worship is changed in that the priests not of the family of Aaron, not even Levites, were used.

And he made houses of high places. Jeroboam seemed not to have the money to build a temple to compare with that at Jerusalem, so he established many places of worship, and built houses suitable for the protection of the idols and caring for the priests. The whole thing was a cheap political expediency in which conscience and godly fear had no place whatsoever.

Which he had devised of his own heart. This is said of the month in which he appointed the feast to be observed, but it may as correctly be said of everything about the worship which was conducted by Jeroboam. And this may with equal truth be said of much of the worship of the religious world of the present day. The burning of incense, the use of holy water, the playing of instruments, the wearing of robes are all devises of men's hearts, and not the commandments of the Lord. Some have the practice of taking the Lord's Supper once a year on Thursday night before Easter Sunday. This is exactly on a par with what Jeroboam did. It is setting a time which God did not determine; it is a devise of man's heart. And it is no more acceptable to God than was Jeroboam's feast. When people go beyond that which is written (1 Cor. 4: 6) in one respect, it is difficult to call a halt and resist inclinations to other departures from the revealed will of the Lord. The best policy is to be content with "sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness." (1 Tim. 6: 3.)

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

After making sure that the children know well the story in this lesson, it will be well to review them on the second of the Ten Commandments, "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, . . . thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them." (Deut. 5: 8, 9.) Teach them that this was an act of disloyalty to God who had been so good to them. Children are capable of a surprising degree of loyalty to those they love. Plant in their hearts a love for, loyalty to God. For this act of sin Jeroboam is ever afterwards spoken of as the king who made Israel sin. (2 Kings 23: 15.)

Intermediate and Senior Departments

A person who was determined to have something good to say of everyone was once asked if he could say anything good about a certain prodigal of the community, to which he replied, "Yes, he is a good example." A good example of what? he was asked. And he said, "A good example of what one should not be." Jeroboam was a fine example of about everything a young man should not be. He was greedy for power, and was willing to divide a nation to be able to exercise rule over people. He was despotic, caring nothing for the welfare of those he ruled. He felt like the people existed, and should work for him; he did not accept his position as an opportunity to serve others. He had no regard for the authority of God either in matters of religion or of state. He ran affairs just as if there were no God to whom he would have to give an account in the last day.

Young People and Adult Departments

No nation can disregard God and continue to live. How long can America continue to disregard God's laws concerning morality? How long can we continue to disregard the laws of marriage and divorce? How long can powerful blocks influence legislation for their benefit with utter disregard for minority groups? How long can these and many other sins continue and America maintain her place in the world?

Families cannot disregard the laws of God and prosper. Churches cannot follow the devises of men's hearts and continue in the favor of God. The seven letters to the churches in Asia emphasize this truth many times over. This lesson presents a fine opportunity to emphasize the necessity of loyalty to God in matters of home, state, and church.

Topics for Discussion

1. The evil that men do lives after them. Solomon's idolatry influenced Jeroboam, and it prepared the people to allow the idolatry of Jeroboam. The evil men do today may be reflected in their children and grandchildren.

2. It is a tragedy to see men with ability misuse opportunities to do good. Jeroboam had ability to correct political abuses; why did he not correct the religious errors of Solomon? Political ambition caused him to make religious compromises; men often do such when running for some political office.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you learn from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
Where was the name Israel first introduced?
Why should the northern kingdom wear that name?
Contrast the kingdom of Judah and kingdom of Israel in size, population, fertility of soil, cities sacred to the memory of Jews.
What did Rehoboam plan to do to stop the rebellion?
Why did he not carry through his plans?
Give the date, places of interest, and persons connected with this lesson.
What is David's definition of righteousness?
What type of person makes a nation great?
In whose eyes does righteousness exalt a nation?
Why is sin against God a reproach to people?
Why is sin against ourselves a reproach?
What city did Jeroboam make his capital?
What other city did he fortify?
What did Jeroboam fear the people would do?
How did he make religion easy for the people?
In what respect was Jeroboam like Aaron?
In what four ways did Jeroboam change the worship?
Contrast Christianity with religions devised in the hearts of men.
With what are we taught to be content in religious matters?

Lesson V—August 1, 1948

CAPTIVITY OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

The Lesson Text

2 Kings 17: 1-6; 18: 8-12

1 In the twelfth year of Ā'hăz king of Jū'dăh began Hō-shē'ā the son of Ē'lăh to reign in Sā-mā'rĭ-ā over Ĭs'rā-ĕl, *and reigned* nine years.
2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of Jē-hō'văh, yet not as the kings of Ĭs'rā-ĕl that were before him.
3 Against him came up Shăl-mă-nē'sĕr king of Ăs-sŷr'ĭ-ā; and Hō-shē'ā became his servant, and brought him tribute.
4 And the king of Ăs-sŷr'ĭ-ā found conspiracy in Hō-shē'ā; for he had sent messengers to So king of Ē'gŷpt, and offered no tribute to the king of Ăs-sŷr'ĭ-ā, as he had done year by year: therefore the king of Ăs-sŷr'ĭ-ā shut him up, and bound him in prison.
5 Then the king of Ăs-sŷr'ĭ-ā came up throughout all the land, and went up to Sā-mā'rĭ-ā, and besieged it three years.
6 In the ninth year of Hō-shē'ā the king of Ăs-sŷr'ĭ-ā took Sā-mā'rĭ-ā, and carried Ĭs'rā-ĕl away unto Ăs-sŷr'ĭ-ā, and placed them in Hā'lăh, and on the Hā'bôr, the river of Gō'zăn, and in the cities of the Mēdes.

8 He smote the Phĭ-lĭs'tĭnes unto Gā'zā and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fortified city.
9 And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hĕz-ĕ-kī'ăh, which was the seventh year of Hō-shē'ā son of Ē'lăh king of Ĭs'rā-ĕl, that Shăl-mă-nē'sĕr king of Ăs-sŷr'ĭ-ā came up against Sā-mā'rĭ-ā, and besieged it.
10 And at the end of three years they took it: in the sixth year of Hĕz-ĕ-kī'ăh, which was the ninth year of Hō-shē'ā king of Ĭs'rā-ĕl, Sā-mā'rĭ-ā was taken.
11 And the king of Ăs-sŷr'ĭ-ā carried Ĭs'rā-ĕl away unto Ăs-sŷr'ĭ-ā, and put them in Hā'lăh, and on the Hā'bôr, the river of Gō'zăn, and in the cities of the Mēdes,
12 Because they obeyed not the voice of Jē-hō'văh their God, but transgressed his covenant, even all that Mō'sĕs the servant of Jē-hō'văh commanded, and would not hear it, nor do it.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"I have given thee a king in mine anger, and have taken him away in my wrath."* (Hos. 13: 11.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 19: 23-25.

Daily Bible Readings

July	26.	M.	Last Battle Between Israel and Judah (2 Chron. 28: 5-15)
July	27.	T.	Conditions in Judah (2 Chron. 28: 16-27)
July	28.	W.	Reform Under Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29: 1-19)
July	29.	T.	Further Reforms in Judah (2 Chron. 29: 20-36)
July	30.	F.	Conditions as Seen by Micah (Mic. 1: 1-16)
July	31.	S.	Amos Asked not to Prophesy Evil (Amos 7: 1-17)
August	1.	S.	End of Israel Foretold (Amos 8: 1-14)

Lesson Subject Explained

The kingdom of Israel existed for a period of two hundred and fifty-four years. During that time there were nineteen kings, and nine different dynasties. The average length of the reign of a king in Israel was thirteen years. Judah existed for a period of three hundred and eighty-seven years and had twenty kings. The average length of the reign of a king in Judah was nineteen and a half years. Several of Israel's kings were killed by men seeking the throne. There was general unrest in Israel, more so than in Judah. And there was more idolatry in Israel than in Judah.

"In the reign of Hoshea the Assyrian Pul, better known as Tiglath-pileser, was demanding a heavey tribute from the kingdom of

Israel. There was always a strong pro-Egyptian faction in Samaria, who demanded that an alliance be made with Egypt to secure protection from the kings of the north and east. Finally sufficient pressure was brought to get Hoshea and the king of Tyre, with other small Canaanite powers, to form an alliance with Egypt against Assyria. However this was not until in the reign of Shalmaneser IV. But Assyrian spies in Samaria knew about the alliance about as soon as it was formed. Shalmaneser immediately set out to bring both countries under subjection. Tyre managed to defeat a portion of Shalmaneser's forces and delayed their final fall for five years. The forces attacking Samaria did little better, though they succeeded after three years in taking the city. However Shalmaneser did not see the victorious outcome of the campaign he started, for he died in 722 B.C., and Sargon took his place. This man was sixty years old when he became king, but he has left records of many thrilling campaigns. His record of the capture of Samaria reads much like the Bible account. 'I besieged the city of Samaria,' says he, 'and took it. I carried off twenty seven thousand two hundred and eighty of its citizens; I chose fifty chariots for myself from the whole number taken; and all the other property of the people of the town I left for my servants to take. I appointed resident officers over them, and imposed on them the same tribute as had formerly been paid. In the place of those taken into captivity I sent thither inhabitants of lands conquered by me, and imposed the tribute on them which I require from Assyrians.' " (Geikie.)

"Thus the northern kingdom finally perished, amidst wild convulsions. Stripped of its inhabitants, the land threatened to relapse into a wilderness. Beasts of prey, and notably lions, increased so much as to become dangerous—a calamity which seemed to the superstitious foreigners scattered over it, a judgment on them for their not knowing how to worship the local god. At their humble request, therefore, an Israelite priest was sent from Assyria to give them the needful instruction, and set apart whom he could as his colleagues. But heathenism is difficult to eradicate, and the only result was the addition of the God of Israel to the gods of the different nations now in the land . . .

"The ultimate fate of the ten tribes has been a subject of endless controversy. It seems beyond doubt, however, that they were ultimately lost—by intermarriage and the loss of tribal exclusiveness—among the nations to whose lands they were carried, in successive deportations, extending through many years." (Geikie.)

Context of the Lesson

In the context of the first section of our lesson text we find how Hoshea became king. "And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead." (2 Kings 15: 30.) While this was going on in Israel Ahaz was reigning in Judah. He walked not in the ways of David, but in the ways of the kings of Israel, even making his sons pass through the fire according to the abominations of the nations round about. He also made a confederacy with the king of Assyria and paid tribute to him. And when Tiglath-pileser came up against Damascus, Ahaz visited him. While there Ahaz saw a heathen altar which he liked, and he made a drawing of it, and had the priest in Jerusalem to build one like it and make the various

offerings upon it. Many other things he did which changed the worship of Jehovah on account of the influence of the Assyrian king.

In the context of the second section of our lesson text we find that Ahaz had died, and his son Hezekiah was reigning in his stead. In spite of the fact that he was only twenty-five years of age when he began to reign, and in spite of the bad influence of his father before him, he was a wise and devoutly religious king. "He did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, according to all that David his father had done. . . . He trusted in Jehovah, the God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor among them that were before him. For he clave to Jehovah; he departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which Jehovah commanded Moses. And Jehovah was with him; whithersoever he went forth he prospered: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not."

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date covered by our lesson is 725 to 721 B.C.

PLACE.—Samaria.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Hoshea, and king of Assyria.

Golden Text Explained

"I have given thee a king in mine anger." There are various ideas among commentators as to whom reference is made here. But the usual explanation is that the Lord refers to Saul. The people demanded a king like the nations around them; they thought if they only had a king to judge them, and to go to battle with them, they would fare much better. It was not a rejection of Samuel as their judge, but a rejection of God as their ruler. And for this reason God was angry when he gave them Saul as their first king. (1 Sam. 8: 7.) Then when Saul rebelled and forced David, the newly anointed, to hide out like a beast for a number of years, he was taken away by suicide when his sons had been killed in battle and his armies defeated. Some say this is what is meant when the text says God took the king away in his wrath.

But it is possible that the first clause of our Golden Text refers to Jeroboam, and the last to Hoshea. After God allowed the people to have a king, and David had proved so acceptable to him, he established the house of David on the throne forever. But there was envy and jealousy among the tribes, especially on the part of Ephraim against Judah. And Ephraim took occasion to play up the burdensome taxation of Solomon as a ground for dividing the kingdom. Ephraim was eminently successful, taking ten of the tribes and most of the wealth of the nation to establish a kingdom in the north. And had it not been for the providence of God in protecting the throne he had given to David it likely would never have survived.

But we learned in our lesson that this division was of Jehovah. And so it was. Solomon had been sinful, and his sins were punished by the division. In God's anger against the sins of Solomon and the people generally, he gave Jeroboam ten tribes. And then as the nation grew steadily worse and more sinful, God took away their king Hoshea, in wrath. That is, he was even more displeased with Israel at the end than he was at the beginning. The language of our Golden Text is addressed to Israel, and for this reason it seems more likely

that the king given was to Israel. Saul was not given to the kingdom of Israel, the nation to whom our text is addressed.

"The kingly government of the ten tribes was given in anger, not only against Solomon, for his defection, but against the ten tribes that desired it, for their discontent and disaffection to the house of David; and God was now about to take away in wrath, by the power of the king of Assyria . . . And then where is thy king? He is gone, and thou shalt abide many days without a king, and without a prince, shall have none to save thee, none to rule over thee. Note, God often gives in anger what we sinfully and inordinately desire; and what we inordinately desire we are commonly disappointed in, and it cannot save us, as we expected it should. What God gives in anger, he takes away in wrath; what he gives because we did not desire it well, he takes away because we did not use it well. It is the happiness of the saints, that, whether God gives or takes, it is all in love, and furnishes them with matter of praise. It is the misery of the wicked, that whether God gives or takes, it is all in wrath; to them nothing is pure. nothing is comfortable." (Matthew Henry.)

Helps on the Lesson Text

In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea to reign. Ahaz began to reign in Judah in 742 B.C., so Hoshea began in Israel in 730 B.C.

He did that which was evil . . . yet not as the kings . . . before him. This statement seems to suggest degree. Hoshea was not as wicked as some of the kings that went before him. Some of them practiced every abomination of the heathen nations. But we are not to conclude from this that Hoshea was a good man. He murdered Pekah to get him out of the way so he might have the throne.

Against him came up Shalmaneser. "Very little is known of him, since Sargon, his successor, who was of a different family, and most likely a rebel against his authority, seems to have destroyed his monuments . . . It is uncertain whether Shalmaneser conducted the siege to its close, or whether he did not lose his crown to Sargon before the city was taken. Sargon claims the capture as his own exploit in his first year; and scripture, it will be found, avoids saying that Shalmaneser took the place. Perhaps Shalmaneser died before Samaria, or perhaps, hearing of Sargon's revolt, he left his troops, or a part of them, to continue the siege, and returned to Assyria, where he was defeated and deposed (or murdered) by his enemy." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary.*)

The king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea. The first time the king of Assyria came up Hoshea offered no resistance; he became his servant, and brought tribute. But this was only to gain time. While paying tribute he was making overtures to So, king of Egypt; and when he thought he was able to resist Assyria, he ceased to pay tribute.

Therefore the king of Assyria shut him up. How the king of Assyria got hold of Hoshea to put him in prison is not stated. "If this happened before the siege, we must account for it either by supposing that Hoshea, hoping to dissemble and gain time, had gone to Shalmaneser to account for his conduct, or that he had been defeated and taken prisoner in some unrecorded battle. That he disappeared very suddenly, like 'foam upon the water,' we may infer from Hosea 13: 11; 10: 7." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary.*)

Samaria besieged three years. The city must have been well fortified, well supplied, and well defended to hold out so long against so strong an enemy. And probably on account of holding out so long, the Assyrians were unusually cruel to the inhabitants when the city finally fell. Hosea prophesied that the "infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up." (Hos. 13: 16.) See also Mic. 1: 1-7.

And placed them in Halah, and on the Habor. "Assyria was originally a small district lying south and west of the mountains of Kurdistan, Armenia, east of the Tigris River and north of the Upper Zab. The limits of the kingdom were extended till it included all Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine and parts of Asia Minor and Egypt. Nineveh, its capital, was on the Tigris River six hundred miles from the Gulf of Persia. The location of Halah is not known, but it is believed to have been in northern Mesopotamia. The Habor is a river now known as the Khabour, a tributary of the Euphrates. Go-zan was a part of Mesopotamia. The cities of the Medes were south of the Caspian Sea." (Tarbell, 1915.)

Because they obeyed not the voice of Jehovah. Disobedience is the reason God gives for the terrible punishment to which Israel was subjected. Read Deut. 28 for the picture Moses drew hundreds of years before of what would happen to them if they disobeyed.

Even all that Moses the servant of Jehovah commanded. When Israel refused to do what Moses commanded, they "obeyed not the voice of Jehovah." So today when we refuse, or neglect, to do what the apostles of Jesus wrote, we obey not the voice of the Lord. God has chosen to speak to us through his servants, and it behooves us to do what they teach.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

God gave all Israel a king when they demanded it; then when the majority of the people did not like that line of kings, God allowed ten tribes to pull off and have another man of their choice. They should have been grateful to God; they should have had enough appreciation about them to be faithful to God for his goodness to them. But in spite of his goodness to them they went deeper and deeper into sin. Children in these departments can get this lesson of the lack of appreciation; and the teacher has an opportunity to build appreciation into their characters.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Israel is an example of people fighting against God. The Lord sent many prophets and seers with this message, "Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers." (2 Kings 17: 13.) But the people disregarded them. These young people are entering an age of independence. They are likely to resent authority in the home, school, and state. Israel resented the authority of God. It is our privilege to do so; but it will be well to count the cost before doing it. No person, or nation, has resented the authority of God and prospered in the long run—not even one. Why think we can get by with what no person in all the past has been able to get by with? This lesson gives the teachers in these divisions good material for breaking down resentment for the authority of God.

Young People and Adult Departments

These departments should be able to trace the development of the nation from Abraham to the fall of Israel. It would be well to make a list of the nineteen kings of Israel from Jeroboam to Hoshea—this would be a good individual assignment for some person in the class. And some facts should be given about at least the outstanding ones.

Topics for Discussion

1. The lesson in Luke 14: 28-33 on counting the cost teaches us to count the cost of refusing to become the disciple of Jesus. If you wish to reject God, better count the cost whether you will be able, with what you are and have, to resist God successfully. The people of Israel resisted God. Regardless of his long-suffering and disinclination to destroy them, finally in justice he completely destroyed them, never again to return. Since they have suffered such utter destruction on account of their resistance, is it not better for us to profit by their example, and be submissive to God?

2. Contrast what is said of Hezekiah in 2 Kings 18: 6, 7 with what is said of Israel in 2 Kings 18: 11, 12.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
How long did the kingdom of Israel last? How many kings and dynasties?
What encouragement did Hoshea have to call for help from Egypt?
What was Sargon's report of the fall of Samaria?
What was the final fate of the ten tribes of Jews?
What do you know of Ahaz in Judah at the time of our lesson?
What do you know of Hezekiah?
Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.
Who was the king God gave in his anger, mentioned in the Golden Text?
Show how the language may be applied to Jeroboam and Hoshea.
How does Hoshea compare with other kings of Israel?
What do you know of Shalmaneser?
How many times did Shalmaneser come up against Hoshea?
What was the occasion of the second invasion?
What happened to Hoshea, and how?
How long did Samaria hold out against the invaders?
What do you know of the extent of the kingdom of Assyria?
What reason did God give for the suffering of Israel?
How did God speak to them, and to us?
What will be the consequence of our disobedience to the voice of God?

Lesson VI—August 8, 1948

THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH

The Lesson Text

1 Kings 12: 21-24; 15: 9-15

21 And when Rē-hō-bō'ăm was come to Jē-ru'sā-lĕm, he assembled all the house of Jū'dăh, and the tribe of Bĕn'jā-mĭn, a hundred and fourscore

thousand chosen men, that were warriors, to fight against the house of Ĭs'rā-ĕl, to bring the kingdom again to Rē-hō-bō'ăm the son of Sŏl'ŏ-mŏn.
22 But the word of God came unto Shē-mā'ĭăh the man of God, saying,
23 Speak unto Rē-hō-bō'ăm the son of Sŏl'ŏ-mŏn, king of Jū'dăh, and unto all the house of Jū'dăh and Bĕn'jă-mĭn, and to the rest of the people, saying,
24 Thus saith Jē-hō'văh, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl: return every man to his house; for this thing is of me. So they hearkened unto the word of Jē-hō'văh, and returned and went their way, according to the word of Jē-hō'văh.

9 And in the twentieth year of Jĕr-ŏ-bō'ăm king of Ĭs'rā-ĕl began Ā'sá to reign over Jū'dăh.
10 And forty and one years reigned he in Jē-ru'sā-lĕm: and his mother's name was Mā'ā-căh the daughter of Ā-bĭsh'ă-lōm.
11 And Ā'sá did that which was right in the eyes of Jē-hō'văh, as did David his father.
12 And he put away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.
13 And also Mā'ā-căh his mother he removed from being queen, because she had made an abominable image for an Ā-shē'răh; and Ā'sá cut down her image, and burnt it at the brook Kĭd'rŏn.
14 But the high places were not taken away: nevertheless the heart of Ā'sá was perfect with Jē-hō'văh all his days.
15 And he brought into the house of Jē-hō'văh the things that his father had dedicated, and the things that himself had dedicated, silver, and gold, and vessels.

2 Kings 18: 1-7

1 Now it came to pass in the third year of Hō-shē'a son of Ē'lăh king of Ĭs'rā-ĕl, that Hĕz-ĕ-kī'ăh the son of Ā'hăz king of Jū'dăh began to reign.
2 Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jē-ru'sā-lĕm: and his mother's name was Ā'bī the daughter of Zĕch-ă-rī'ăh.
3 And he did that which was right in the eyes of Jē-hō'văh, according to all that David his father had done.
4 He removed the high places, and brake the pillars, and cut down the Ā-shē'răh: and he brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Mō'sēs had made: for unto those days the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl did burn incense to it; and he called it Nē-hŭsh'tăn.
5 He trusted in Jē-hō'văh, the God of Ĭs'rā-ĕl; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Jū'dăh, nor *among them* that were before him.
6 For he clave to Jē-hō'văh; he departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which Jē-hō'văh commanded Mō'sēs.
7 And Jē-hō'văh was with him; whithersoever he went forth he prospered: and he rebelled against the king of Ăs-sŷr'ĭ-ā, and served him not.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"In Judah is God known."* (Psalm 76: 1a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—2 Kings 23: 1-3.

Daily Bible Readings

August 2. M.....Rehoboam First King of Judah (1 Kings 14: 21-31)
August 3. T..... Judah's Righteousness Prevails (2 Chron. 13: 1-22)
August 4. W.....Royal Seed Almost Exterminated (2 Kings 11: 1-3)
August 5. T..... A Woman Usurper Executed (2 Kings 11: 4-16)
August 6. F.....Judah Strengthened in Righteousness (2 Chron. 15: 1-15)
August 7. S.....Judah Failed to Rely on Jehovah (2 Chron. 16: 1-10)
August 8. S.....Faithful Priests in Judah (2 Chron. 26: 16-23)

Lesson Subject Explained

At the death of Solomon the kingdom was divided because Rehoboam, the son of Solomon and heir to the throne, refused to listen to the request of the people to lower the taxes. Ten tribes went off under the leadership of Jeroboam to establish the kingdom of Israel. That left Judah, Benjamin, and the Levites to compose the kingdom of Judah, the southern kingdom. However the cities of Bethel and Jericho, though in Benjamin's territory, went with the kingdom of

Israel. But a part of the territory of Simeon belonged to Judah (1 Sam. 27: 6; 1 Kings 19: 3), as did a part of Dan (2 Chron. 11: 11.) And then during the reigns of Abijah and Asa some of the territory of Ephraim was taken by Judah. (2 Chron. 13: 19; 15: 8; 17: 2.) And after the deportation of Israel the kingdom of Judah exercised an influence, if not actual jurisdiction, over a considerable part of the territory of the northern kingdom.

"A singular gauge of the growth of the kingdom of Judah is supplied by the progressive augmentation of the army under successive kings. In David's time the warriors of Judah numbered at least five hundred thousand. But Rehoboam brought into the field only one hundred and eighty thousand men: Abijah, eighteen years afterwards, four hundred thousand (2 Chron. 13: 3): Asa (2 Chron. 14: 8,) his successor, five hundred and eighty thousand, exactly equal to the sum of the armies of his two predecessors: Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 17: 14-19,) the next king, numbered his warriors in five armies, the aggregate of which is one million one hundred and sixty thousand, exactly double the army of his father, and exactly equal to the sum of the armies of his three predecessors. After four inglorious reigns the energetic Amaziah could muster only three hundred thousand men when he set out to recover Edom. His son Uzziah had a standing (2 Chron. 26: 11) force of three hundred seven thousand and five hundred fighting men. . . .

"The kingdom of Judah possessed many advantages which secured for it a longer continuance than that of Israel. A frontier less exposed to powerful enemies, a soil less fertile, a population hardier and more united, a fixed and venerated center of administration and religion, an hereditary aristocracy in the sacerdotal caste, an army always subordinate, a succession of kings which no revolution interrupted, many of whom were wise and good, and strove successfully to promote the moral and spiritual as well as the material prosperity of their people; still more than these, the devotion of the people to the One True God, which, if not always a pure and elevated sentiment, was yet a contrast to such devotion as could be inspired by the worship of the calves or of Baal; and lastly the popular reverence for and obedience to the divine law so far as they learned it from their teachers: to these and other secondary causes is to be attributed the fact that Judah survived her more populous and more powerful sister kingdom by one hundred and thirty-five years; and lasted from 975 B.C. to 586 B.C." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.)

Context of the Lesson

In the context of the first section of our Lesson Text we have the record of the meeting of Rehoboam with representatives of the people of the united kingdom at Shechem, at which time they requested him to make certain concessions to them in the matter of taxes. He called for three days' time to consider the matter. During this time he called in the old men to ask their counsel. Then he called in young men of his age to ask them what to do. The young men gave exactly opposite advice to that given by the old men, and since that pleased Rehoboam, he took the advice of the young men. When he told the people his decision, they said, "What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David." Conceit, love of

power, lack of wise consideration for the welfare of the people cost the young king the greater portion of his people and territory. They left him and selected Jeroboam as their king. And as we have seen in preceding lessons their choice was as unwise as the action of Rehoboam.

In the context of the second section of our Lesson Text we learn that Judah did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah in that they built high places, and pillars, and Asherim on every high hill and under every green tree. And for this disobedience Shishak king of Egypt was allowed to come up against Jerusalem and take away all the treasures of the temple and the king's palace; he took all the shields of gold Solomon made. And in their place Rehoboam made shields of brass. Sin often reduces people to a cheap imitation of the glory of the righteous. Following Rehoboam was Abijam (Abijah) who reigned three years. He was even more wicked than his father, and it is suggested that the only reason his seed was allowed to continue on the throne was "for David's sake . . . give him a lamp in Jerusalem; . . . because David did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite."

In the context of the third section of our Lesson Text we learn of the destruction of Samaria and the captivity of the kingdom of Israel in Assyria. The king of Assyria brought people he had captured in other lands and settled them in Israel. Wild beasts became so numerous in the land that word was sent the king of Assyria that the lions came on account of the people not knowing the law of the god of the land. So the king of Assyria sent a Levite to dwell in the land to teach the people the law of Jehovah. However this teaching did but very little good, for it is said, "They feared Jehovah, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations from among whom they had been carried."

The Historical Background

TIME.—First section, 975 B.C.; second section 955 to 914 B.C., the reign of Asa; third section, 726 to 698 B.C., the reign of Hezekiah.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Rehoboam, Asa, and Hezekiah.

Golden Text Explained

"In Judah is God known." This Psalm is said to be a song of Asaph, but if so it certainly was not the Asaph of David's day. This Psalm was written after the division of the kingdom, for the first verse speaks of Judah and Israel as separate nations. Perhaps this Psalm was written on the occasion of the utter destruction of Sennacherib's army before Jerusalem in the reign of Hezekiah. (2 Kings 18, 19.)

1. God is known only to those to whom God reveals himself. Though all men are of a nature to worship, none would worship Jehovah unless taught of him and how to worship him. This is evident from the fact that heathen nations today, where the Bible has never gone, do not worship the true God. The characteristics of God are beyond the imagination of man. No heathen ever invented an

idea of a supreme being which begins to resemble the description we have of God in the Bible.

2. God is known only to those people who wish to retain him in their knowledge. We read that the Gentiles did not like to retain God in their knowledge, so God gave them up unto a reprobate mind. (Rom. 1: 28.) People can put God out of their minds. That is a fair description of the vast majority of people today. They are not determined to be against God; they are not trying to learn what will please God, and then deliberately doing the opposite to show their disrespect for God. But people are just not taking God into account. It never occurs to people to inquire if a certain course of conduct is pleasing to God. If it pleases them and those interested, they do whatever occurs to them to do.

3. Where God is known and respected peace and prosperity are enjoyed. This is true of nations, homes, and churches. God made such a promise to Israel, but their disobedience robbed them of the peace and prosperity which surely would have been theirs throughout their generations. (Psalm 78.) How much longer can America enjoy jeace and prosperity while giving so little attention to the word of the Lord? The divorce rate is at an all-time high because homes are being built without regard for the law of the Lord. If God were allowed to direct the formation of homes, and if his will were followed in the maintaining of those homes, they would not end in failure.

Helps on the Lesson Text

He assembled all the house of Judah. When Rehoboam had announced his decision on the tax question, and the people had indicated their rebellion by stoning a representative of Rehoboam, the king fled to Jerusalem to set in motion such measures as would be necessary to put down the rebellion.

To bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam. One hundred and eighty thousand soldiers were gathered for the purpose of bringing the ten tribes under subjection. A king would not be expected to lose five-sixths of his nation without putting up a fight.

Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren. These are the words Jehovah gave the prophet Shemaiah to speak to Rehoboam and his army. It must have taken courage to tell a king such when he was gathering an army to put down a rebellion. The reputation and authority of the king were at stake; he may be considered a weakling if he allows the major portion of his kingdom to secede without a struggle.

For this thing is of me. These are the words Jehovah gave the prophet. God told Rehoboam that the division of the kingdom was his doing. This was God's way of punishing the nation for the sins during the reign of Solomon. (1 Kings 11: 31-40.)

They hearkened unto the word of Jehovah, and returned. This submission to God's will in the matter is a credit to Rehoboam and his people. It also indicates the influence of a prophet. In the eyes of men Rehoboam would have been justified in raising the army to subdue the rebels. No doubt his course seemed to him a righteous one, and the opinion of any one man in the nation would not have been sufficient to change his course; but God's word spoken by a prophet had enough power to change the course of one hundred and eighty thousand men.

Asa began to reign over Judah. Asa was the third king in Judah, and he reigned forty-one years. He was a good man, and did much to bring "Judah to a consciousness of the high destiny to which God had called her, and to the belief that the divine power was truly at work within her." He defeated Zerah the king of Egypt who came against him with a million men, gained the undying respect of his people, and renewed the covenant by which the nation was rededicated to God.

His mother's name was Maacah. This woman was Asa's grandmother. "During the reign of her grandson Asa she occupied at the court of Judah the high position of 'king's mother' . . . It may be that at Abijah's death, after a short reign of three years, Asa was left a minor, and Maacah acted as regent, like Athaliah under similar circumstances."

Asa did that which was right. It is said that he did as his father David had done. He corrected abuses such as sodomy and idolatry. In his zeal to correct religious error he started at home. His grandmother had made an abominable image for an Asherah, which was an idol that promoted immorality. This he destroyed, and demoted his grandmother. In the text she is called "queen," but in the margin we have "queen mother." This was an honorary position which gave considerable freedom and power in the court. Her abuse of this power and freedom was both unwise and dangerous.

Hezekiah the son of Ahaz . . . began to reign. He was the twelfth king of Judah, and one among the three best kings, and from the wording of our text was the best of them. In 2 Chron. 29 is found an account of his religious reforms which should be read in this connection.

Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign. Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah, was only thirty-six years old when he died. (2 Kings 16: 2.) If Hezekiah was twenty-five, he was born when his father was only eleven years old. Authentic records assure us that such was often the case among eastern people.

He brake in pieces the brazen serpent. This is the serpent which Moses put on a pole in the midst of the camp and to which the people were to look when bitten by serpents. (Num. 21: 8, 9.) It was good when used as the Lord intended, but an evil when improper use made of it. For this reason no relics of Christ were allowed to be preserved. If people had the cross on which Jesus was crucified, they would worship it; many even worship a sorry representation of the cross. What would they do with the real thing!

And he called it Nehushtan. This word means "a brazen thing," but no one seems to know whether Hezekiah called it that in derision when he destroyed it, or whether the people generally called it. Authorities are about equally divided on the subject.

And Jehovah was with him. This is said on account of Hezekiah's faithful and zealous devotion to God and his ways. It is another instance of God's blessings on [illegible] *in pieces the brazen serpent.*

he found there when he besieged Jerusalem under Zedekiah." (A. Clarke.)

And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out. He saw that further resistance was useless. It is a pity that Zedekiah at a later

13 Why will ye die, thou and thy people, by the sword, by the famine, and
by th

Young People and Adult Departments

Loyal defense of the truth

the dangers of false doctrines and unscriptural practices which may be brought into the congregations which they serve. They are to stop the mouths of false teachers as a means of protecting the souls under their care, lest they be carried about with every wind of doctrine. (Titus 1; Eph. 4.) If they become so interested in worldly organizations, such as civic and fraternal orders, that they have little or no time to look after the welfare of the children of God, the babes in Christ, they are unfaithful watchmen; and if souls are lost from the congregations they serve, they will have to answer for them in the day of judgment. (Heb. 13: 17; 1 Pet. 5: 1-4.)

Preachers and teachers have their part of the responsibility for the exposition of error and the teaching of the truth. A watchman was to warn of danger. These servants of the church are to keep a sharp lookout for dangerous trends and tendencies, and give warning to those who have less ability and time to spend on such matters. The performance of this duty will bring criticism, especially from those involved. And when those involved are wealthy, there will be the temptation to fail to sound the warning. Or if men of influence in the church and community are involved, there will be the danger of the preacher being asked to move if he does his duty. But such considerations are not to be allowed to keep the faithful watchman from giving the warning in no uncertain tones.

Helps on the Lesson Text

When I bring the sword upon a land. We have seen in past lessons that God has a hand in the affairs of nations. He used nations to punish Israel, and at other times he used nations to bless his people. We have also seen in this lesson that God used one wicked nation to humble other proud heathen nations. Yet it is certain that some of these nations did not know they were being so used. How much does God have to do in the affairs of nations today? And how does he exercise this influence over nations? We may be sure he does not exercise such an influence over them as to take away their responsibility and render them guiltless; but how he does this we have no way of knowing.

His blood shall be upon his own head. This is a form of expression which denotes the direst of responsibility. This is said of those who hear the warning of the watchman but pay no heed to it. The watchman has done his duty by sounding the alarm, but some one would rather sleep, or continue in the enjoyment of the hour, than take the trouble to see what the danger is or how near it is. There are those today who are warned of the danger of certain courses of action, but the enjoyment is too great to give up, the pleasure is too engaging and enticing to discontinue. If he dies in his sin, his blood shall be upon his own head.

His blood will I require at the watchman's hand. This is the case of the unfaithful watchman who sounded not the warning. He saw the danger, but did not have enough interest in the souls under his protection, or was not as loyal to them as he was to the enemy, to warn them of approaching danger. The souls perished in their iniquity, and the watchman will perish with them. Paul told Timothy if he would preach the gospel and live right he wou'd save himself and those who heard him. (1 Tim. 4: 16.) And the inference is that if he did not preach the gospel he would fail to save others, and he himself would be lost. The fact that souls in sin are not

warned does not save them. They shall die in their sin. People are lost, not because they have not been warned to come to Christ, but because they are in sin. Some have the idea that the heathens of today will all be saved if we do not preach the gospel to them. If that is true, more can be saved by not preaching than by preaching the gospel. People are lost because of their sin, and the gospel is the only power God has to save the lost. As watchmen it is our duty to preach the gospel to save as many as possible. If we do not preach the gospel to those lost in sin, we will be lost. The statement that their blood will be upon the watchman is proof that failing to warn them means that the watchman must pay for his unfaithfulness with his life.

O wicked man, thou shalt surely die. As a watchman it would be the duty of Ezekiel to say just that very thing to some one. Would he have the courage to do so? Today it is sometimes the duty of elders and preachers to reprove and rebuke, to characterize men as wicked, as lost in sin. To fail to summon the courage and deliver the message for God is to prove an unfaithful watchman, and such a cowardly course may cost the lives of both the wicked man and the watchman.

I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. This is the language of Jehovah. It is not the will of God that any should perish, but he would have all men be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. (2 Pet. 3: 9; 1 Tim. 2: 4.) The penalties of law are set to discourage men from sin and to manifest the righteous judgment of God, not to allow him to satisfy a thirst for revenge and cruelty.

The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression. The man who lives righteously for many years and then turns to wickedness, cannot plead his righteous acts in his favor in the judgment. There is no such thing as building up so much good will on the account books of heaven that one can quit living right and live in sin, and still have enough credit to save him. And if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is right, his wickedness shall not be remembered against him in the day of judgment.

If he trust to his righteousness. The man who trusts in the righteousness he has done to save him, and, in this trust, he becomes sinful, his righteousness shall not be remembered in the judgment. In fact we are not to have our trust in our righteousness anyway. We are to put our trust in the Lord. The blood of Christ is our only hope. Were it not for his death in our behalf none of us could possibly have enough righteousness to save us. We are not saved by our righteousness, but by the death of Christ for us. Our obedience is but our means of manifesting our acceptance of his death in our place. No obedience, no acceptance; hence lost. But the obedience is not the meritorious saving element; nothing but the blood can merit the salvation of even one soul from one sin.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Teachers using sand tables or flannel boards to illustrate their lessons can use them to good advantage in presenting this lesson. Construct a city, or fort, with a wall around it; place the watchman

on the wall; and show in the distance the enemy coming. Applications of the lesson can be made to the effect that parents are watchmen in the behalf of the children, and that they should give heed to the warnings and advice of their fathers and mothers. The teachers and preachers are watchmen to keep them from going astray, or from being hurt by sinful habits they are prone to form.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Is the preacher meddling when he warns young people of the common sins of the day and the community in which they live? Is he a joy killer and a back number when he exposes sin and calls on his people to have no fellowship with sinful practices? Do you think it is about time for the preacher to move when he gets around to your favorite sin? He is but a faithful watchman, and deserves your respect and support. Young people who wish to do right will appreciate such timely warnings and profit by them.

Young People and Adult Departments

Am I my brother's keeper? This question is nearly as old as the human race. But the truth suggested by it needs to be impressed upon every generation. Yes, each one is his brother's keeper. Jesus Christ voluntarily became his brother's Saviour and keeper, and by so doing set for each one of us an example that we should walk in his steps. We either become our brother's keeper, or our own destroyer; the man who watches not for his brother loses himself.

In the adult department the lessons in the latter part of the text should be stressed. *If the wicked turn from his way*—this should be an inducement to many to turn away from sin before it is too late. And, *if the righteous turn from his righteousness*—this should be a restraining force in the lives of men and women to continue steadfast, unmovable from the paths of duty in the last few years of their journey through life.

Topics for Discussion

1. What does the teaching of this lesson do for the doctrine of universal salvation? Will all men be saved regardless of how they live?

2. What does the teaching of this lesson do for the doctrine of "once in grace, always in grace"? or the impossibility of apostasy? Can a righteous man turn from his righteousness, and die in his iniquity? If one turn from righteousness and love iniquity and die in iniquity, will he go to heaven in his iniquity?

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
What do you know of Ezekiel's parentage, and place of residence?
What connection has been suggested between Jeremiah and Ezekiel?
What was Ezekiel's duty to his people, and of what did his work consist?
About how long did Ezekiel serve his people?
What do you know of the prophecy of Egypt's punishment, and its fulfillment?

What of the time, place, and persons of this lesson?
What do you know of the periods of the Jewish night?
In what ways, and for what reasons might a watchman fail to do his duty?
What duties do elders have in this respect?
In what sense are preachers and teachers responsible for the souls of people?
In what ways may they be tempted to fail in their duty?
What is meant by God bringing a sword upon the land?
What happens to one who heeds not the warning of the watchman?
What happens to the watchman if he gives not the warning?
What message is the watchman to deliver to the wicked man?
Why are penalties attached to laws?
In what are we not to trust? In what to trust for salvation?
Can a righteous man turn from his righteousness, and what becomes of him in judgment?
Can one do enough righteousness in the first half of his life to save him if he turns to sin in the latter part of his life?

Lesson X—September 5, 1948

INFLUENCE OF DANIEL IN THE CAPTIVITY

The Lesson Text

Dan. 6: 1-11

1 It pleased Dă-rī'ŭs to set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty satraps, who should be throughout the whole kingdom;
2 And over them three presidents, of whom Dăn'iĕl was one; that these satraps might give account unto them, and that the king should have no damage.
3 Then this Dăn'iĕl was distinguished above the presidents and the satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.
4 Then the presidents and the satraps sought to find occasion against Dăn'iĕl as touching the kingdom; but they could find no occasion nor fault, forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.
5 Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Dăn'iĕl, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.
6 Then these presidents and satraps assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Dă-rī'ŭs, live for ever.
7 All the presidents of the kingdom, the deputies and the satraps, the counsellors and the governors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a strong interdict, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.
8 Now, O king, establish the interdict, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Mēdes and Pēr'si-ăns, which altereth not.
9 Wherefore king Dă-rī'ŭs signed the writing and the interdict.
10 And when Dăn'iĕl knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house (now his windows were open in his chamber toward Jē-ru'sā-lĕm); and he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.
11 Then these men assembled together, and found Dăn'iĕl making petition and supplication before his God.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"I make a decree, that in all the dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel."* (Dan. 6: 26a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Dan. 6: 19-23.

Daily Bible Readings

August 30. M.....Daniel Wins His First Test (Dan. 1: 14-21)
August 31. T.....Daniel's Friends Put to the Test (Dan. 3: 1-12)
September 1. W.....Daniel's Friends Promoted (Dan. 3: 13-30)
September 2. T.....Nebuchadnezzar Dreams of a Tree. (Dan. 4: 4-27)
September 3. F.....King's Dream Comes True (Dan. 4: 28-37)
September 4. S..... Handwriting on the Wall (Dan. 5: 1-12)
September 5. S.....Daniel Interprets the Writing (Dan. 5: 13-30)

Lesson Subject Explained

Is it possible for a captive to exercise a powerful influence? Can a prisoner of war wield an influence over those who hold him in bondage? An average man might think his opportunities for doing good so little that he would make no effort. But regardless of circumstances others before the time of Daniel had been able to do good. Joseph was sold for a household slave, his mistress told a lie on him that got him a prison sentence; but in spite of these unfavorable circumstances he rose to the second place in the kingdom of Egypt. A little Jewish maid made a remark one day which reached the ears of the king of Syria, who sent his favorite soldier to the land of Israel to be cured of his leprosy. And in this way Naaman not only was cured of his dread disease, but he learned that there was no God in all the earth but the God of Israel. (2 Kings 5.) By using the small opportunities which they had to the best advantage possible they were able to render valuable service to humanity, and honor the name of their God. So Daniel, though in captivity in a foreign land, was one who was determined to do good. He purposed in his heart that he would be true to God regardless of the cost in suffering, and people of that type always find opportunities to honor the Lord and serve humanity.

Daniel was carried into captivity in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, about 606 B.C., and within three years was made the chief of all the wise men of the realm. He still held this position thirty years later when he told Nebuchadnezzar that a dream he had meant that he would run with the beasts and eat grass. Then in 538 B.C. the king set one hundred and twenty princes over his kingdom, and selected three men as presidents to whom these princes were to give account of their activities, and Daniel was one of these three presidents. And it is said that "Daniel was distinguished above the presidents and the satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm." (Dan. 6: 3.) Then in 536 B.C. Cyrus came to the throne, and in the first year of his reign he decreed the return of the Jews to their own land. Thus it will be seen that Daniel served in the highest offices possible in the nation all during the captivity, and that he was closely associated with the rulers of the nation. How much credit can be given him for influencing the minds of the rulers in making them favorable towards a return of the people we have no way of knowing. Daniel knew that the captivity was to be but seventy years, and he knew when that was to end. (Dan. 9: 2.) And he prayed fervently concerning these matters. Would he pray about such things, and not use his high office to bring it about? Hence we may be sure that his influence on the rulers of the land had much to do in causing the rulers to have favorable impressions of the Israelites, and to think favorably of allowing them to return.

Context of the Lesson

For the context of this lesson it is necessary for us to go back to the historical records. We learn from Daniel that he was carried away from Jerusalem in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim. This Jehoiakim was the second son of Josiah, the good king. On the death of Josiah, Jehoahaz, the younger son of Josiah, was made king; but he reigned only three months before he was taken into captivity by Pharaoh-necoh and died in Egypt. When he was taken off the throne, his elder brother Eliakim, whose name was changed to Jehoiakim, was placed thereon. About this time Nebuchadnezzar defeated Pharaoh and fell heir to all the tributary provinces of Egypt, among which was Judah. He came then into Judah and found Jehoiakim defenseless, took him in chains, but for some reason not stated changed his mind and allowed him on promises of allegiance to retain his throne. However Jehoiakim did not keep his promise but three years, after which time he rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. But it was in the early part of his reign when Daniel was taken captive, at the time when Nebuchadnezzar changed his mind and allowed Jehoiakim to stay.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date of this lesson is 606 B.C.

PLACES.—Jerusalem and Babylon.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel and his three friends.

Golden Text Explained

1. *The setting of the text.* Our text is a statement concerning Darius and a decree which he made and published to all people and nations and languages on the earth. This was sometime after Daniel had been made one of the three presidents in the kingdom, and after Darius had thought about promoting Daniel even higher than that. This elevation of Daniel, and the contemplation by the king of making him "grand vizier" over the whole realm stirred up the envy and jealousy of other officeholders in the kingdom. And in as much as they could not find any fault in Daniel with which to accuse him before the king, they had to plan his destruction in some other way. It occurred to them that they should get the king to sign a decree that only the king was to be worshiped for a certain period of time. This appealed to the vanity of the king, and not thinking very seriously of the effects of the decree, he signed it. The penalty for disobedience was to be cast into the lions' den. Daniel had his habits of prayer, which his enemies knew about, and it was in this manner that they expected to bring Daniel into disrepute with the king. They felt sure he would continue to pray to his God the same as before the decree was signed. So they went to Daniel's house to see if he would pray as he was in the habit of doing. Daniel knelt before his window facing Jerusalem and prayed as usual. They accused him before the king. The king was sorry he had signed such a decree, but was helpless to stay the sentence, so Daniel was cast into the den of lions. The king was a man of some faith, for he said, "Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee." And after a sleepless night the king hurried to the den the next morning to take Daniel from the den. Then the enemies of Daniel, with their families, were cast into the den.

2. *Implications of the text.* First, it is implied here that Daniel was such a faithful and loyal servant of God that he had convinced the king of the reality and attributes of Jehovah. He was convinced that Daniel's God was living—not dead as were idols. Next, Daniel's God was a steadfast God, and that for ever. And one of the attributes of Jehovah is his immutability, or unchangeableness. And the words "for ever" here may indicate that Darius had some idea of the eternity of Jehovah; that he is eternally unchangeable. Next, Daniel's God had a kingdom which should never be destroyed, and his dominion in that kingdom would never have an end. Next, he works signs which are far above the power of kings like Darius to work, and he rescues his people like Daniel in their times of trial and danger. These are the reasons Darius says all men in his kingdom were to fear and tremble before Daniel's God.

3. *Applications of the text.* First, we need men in high places with the character of Daniel to wield a good influence in national affairs. Next, we need rulers in the nations of the world today who realize that Jehovah is a living God, and that he should be consulted in the affairs of the nations. And, last, we need rulers who will publish their faith to the nations over which they rule to encourage their subjects to believe in this God of Daniel, and to set an example of humble obedience to and trust in that living and true God. It is the business of the church to preach the gospel to all, including the rulers, and to pray for the rulers that they may be led to have the knowledge of God which Darius had which led him to send such a decree to all the provinces of his kingdom.

Helps on the Lesson Text

The land of Shinar to the house of his god. The exact limits of the land of Shinar are not known, but it is supposed to be about the same as Mesopotamia, that region lying between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. The god of Nebuchadnezzar was here called Bel, which is simply the Babylonian form of Baal, so prominent among the heathen gods of that day.

The seed royal and of the nobles. By the seed royal is meant the immediate kin of the king. And the nobles were those of high standing in the affairs of the government. It was thought that the best talent of the land wou'd be found among people of this class.

Youths in whom was no blemish. In the first place the king wanted young boys, for he knew older men would be hard to train. The word "blemish" has reference to the body. He wanted young boys with as near perfect physical bodies as possible. The next term "well-favored" refers to beauty. He wanted handsome young boys. In eastern countries it was thought that "a corrupt and sordid soul can scarcely inhabit in a serene and ingenious aspect; and I have observed . . . in the courts of great men, their personal attendants have been of comely, lusty youths, well-habited, deporting themselves with singular modesty and respect to the presence of their masters." (Burder.)

Understanding science. The Jews were not noted for their knowledge of science as we use that word today. "Their science extended chiefly to music, architecture, natural history, agriculture, morals, theology, war, and the knowledge of future events; in all which they occupied an honorable distinction among the nations. In many of these respects they were, doubtless, far in advance of the

Chaldeans, and it was probably the purpose of the Chaldean monarch to avail himself of what they knew." (Barnes.)

Learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. The Chaldeans were noted for their knowledge of astronomy; this science is said to have originated in that country. They were also noted for their knowledge of astrology. "The stars were studied principally to endeavor to ascertain what influence they exerted over the fates of men, and especially what might be predicted from their position on the birth of an individual, as to his future life." (Barnes.) But of geology, chemistry, and mathematics they were wholly ignorant. The Chaldean and Hebrew languages, though both were from Shemitish stock, were so unlike that a person knowing only one could not understand the other. The parent stock divided into three languages, spoken in different sections of the country, Aramæan, Hebrew, and Arabic. Aramæan was that spoken in Chaldea, and when the Jews returned they brought it with them. This is the language spoken by our Lord, sometimes called *Syro-Chaldaic* because it was a mixture of the eastern and western dialects.

Unto Daniel he gave the name of Belteshazzar. The word Daniel means "God is my judge." The word Belteshazzar means "Prince of Bel."

Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself. The king determined what the youths were to eat so that they might be in the best condition. But the boys wished to abstain from this food, for reasons we are left to guess. Some have suggested the meat was that which was offered to idols, or that some of it was unclean to Jews. The prophets said such would be. (Ezek. 4: 13; Hos. 9: 3.) And the wine might well lead to excess, which Daniel knew to be both dangerous and sinful.

He requested of the prince of the eunuchs. He might have offered silent, stubborn resistance; but Daniel was a wise youth. He made a request rather than offer stubborn resistance. Some who object to bearing arms during war might profit by Daniel's example. But what if his request had been refused? From events later in life we may safely conclude that he would have been true to his convictions regardless of the price.

God made Daniel to find kindness and compassion. Is such an operation on the part of God impossible today? God still cares for his own, and makes all things work together for their good, not necessarily for their deliverance from trials and suffering, but for their good.

Prove thy servants, . . . ten days. When the prince of eunuchs expressed fear that they would not make the progress expected by the king he would suffer, Daniel made this proposition. Daniel had faith in God as well as knowledge of what food was necessary for good physical condition.

Pulse to eat, and water to drink. Of the word pulse we read, "Gesenius translates the words 'vegetables, herbs, such as are eaten in half-fast, as opposed to flesh and more delicate food.' Probably the term denotes uncooked grains of any kind, whether barley, wheat, millet, vetches, etc." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary.*) And those who think beverages necessary to the best of health might give special attention to Daniel's diet, water and vegetables.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Stories from the life of Daniel are always of absorbing interest to children. And they should be encouraged to tell the stories themselves, even if they wish to tell a story already told by some other member of the class. God's care for children may be given emphasis here. Daniel and his three friends are called children, and while his age is not known, he must not have been out of his teens, and may have been nearer his middle teens. We sometimes lose sight of the fact that children can be of service in the church. One of the best lessons for these departments is that they may be helpers of Jesus. Make a list of ways in which they can do good—carrying flowers to the sick, saving their dimes for the orphan children, etc.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

At the time of this lesson Daniel was undoubtedly about the age of the oldest boys in these groups. What would they have done if they had been in his place? What would they do if their athletic coach were to require of them to eat something forbidden by the Lord? or to engage in some activity which is unbecoming a Christian? Courage to do right in all sorts of circumstances and in every environment is greatly needed among youths of this age. If teachers can get each one in the class to purpose in his heart that he will not do anything, regardless of what the gang does, which is contrary to Christian principles, this lesson will be a very profitable one. And it would be a good thing for the girls in these classes to purpose in their hearts that they will not date a boy who stoops to the doing of things unbecoming a Christian. In this way they could wield a great influence on the boys, as well as do themselves a big favor.

Young People and Adult Departments

Much of the foregoing is applicable in the young people's division. Remembering God and being loyal to him and his commandments in a foreign land is an indication of real character. Character is what a person is when no acquaintance is looking. Daniel's peaceable way of settling his difference on the matter of food is a good lesson for adults. We should cultivate the habit and ability to settle all differences in a peaceable manner.

Topics for Discussion

1. A firm purpose to do right is half the battle in time of temptation. If we wait until we are in the midst of a temptation to decide whether we will do a certain thing, we will not be in position to arrive at the truth as to whether it is right or wrong. Have well-grounded convictions on all matters of morals, and purpose of heart to be on the side of virtue in all matters, and temptations will be easy to resist.

2. Compare Joseph and Daniel for purity under difficult circumstances in foreign lands. The prodigal son may be used by way of contrast.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?

What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
What other prisoners of war rendered good service in their captivity?
How soon and in what way did Daniel gain prominence in Babylon?
Why was Daniel preferred above the other presidents?
How did Daniel have opportunity to influence the kings to release the captives?
Discuss the context of this lesson, and the historical background.
What is the setting of the Golden Text?
What are the implications of the text?
How can the teaching of the text be applied today?
Where is the land of Shinar, and who was the god of that land?
What class of people did the king want for special service?
In what sciences did the Jews excel?
For what sciences were the Chaldeans noted?
What do you know of the language of the Chaldeans?
What is the meaning of the words Daniel, and Belteshazzar?
What purpose did Daniel make in his heart?
How did Daniel meet the situation concerning food and drink?
What part did God have in this matter?
What proposition did Daniel make as a test?
What is pulse?
What is the value of temperance in food and drink?

Lesson XI—September 12, 1948

DANIEL INTERPRETS NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

The Lesson Text

Dan. 2: 36-45

36 This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.
37 Thou, O king, art king of kings, unto whom the God of heaven hath given the kingdom, the power, and the strength, and the glory;
38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens hath he given into thy hand, and hath made thee to rule over them all: thou art the head of gold.
39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee; and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.
40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron, forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron that crusheth all these, shall it break in pieces and crush.
41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.
42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.
43 And whereas thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron doth not mingle with clay.
44 And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.
45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"In the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed."* (Dan. 2: 44a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Dan. 2: 31-35.

Daily Bible Readings

September 6. M.....The King's Forgotten Dream (Dan. 2: 1-16)
September 7. T.....Daniel Saves the Wise Men (Dan. 2: 17-30)
September 8. W.....Belshazzar's Dream (Dan. 7: 1-14)
September 9. T.....Daniel Interprets the Dream (Dan. 7: 15-28)
September 10. F.....Daniel's Prayer for His People (Dan. 9: 1-19)
September 11. S.....Gabriel Brings an Answer (Dan. 9: 20-27)
September 12. S.....The Time of the End (Dan. 12: 1-13)

Lesson Subject Explained

Daniel is the fourth of the major prophets, and, perhaps, the plainest of them all. He prophesied things of the future with such minuteness and exactness that his critics have said the book was written after many of the things transpired. "Of all the old prophets Daniel is the most distinct in the order of time, and easiest to be understood; and on this account, Sir Isaac Newton observes, in those events which concern the last times, he must be the interpreter of the rest. All his predictions relate to each other, as they were several parts of one general prophecy. The first of them are easiest to be understood, and every succeeding prophecy adds something to the former. Though his style is not so lofty and figurative as that of the other prophets, it is more suitable to his subject, being clear and concise; his narratives and descriptions are simple and natural; and, in short, he writes more like a historian than a prophet." (Horne's *Introduction to the Scriptures*, Vol. IV. p. 217.)

Context of the Lesson

The preceding lesson may be considered as a treatment of the context of this lesson. Nebuchadnezzar had made a successful march on Judah, had exacted from the king to pay tribute, and had carried away as captives, and probably as hostages, among them the royal seed and many of the nobles. Among these favored sons of Judah was Daniel. He and his three friends were selected for special study and training. Refusing to take the diet furnished by the king, these four boys ate vegetables and drank water. They made better progress than others and the king was very pleased with them. "And in every matter of wisdom and understanding, concerning which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his realm."

Early in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar the king had a dream, which, when he was awake, he could not remember. So he called his wise men, the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and Chaldeans, and required of them that they tell him what he dreamed as well as the interpretation thereof. And when they could not do so he was going to put them to death. This, of course, would include Daniel and his three friends, so they were being sought to be slain. When Daniel learned of the intended slaughter he asked that the king would appoint him a time to reveal the dream and its interpretation. Then Daniel prayed to God, and gave thanks that all things are known to him, and that he can give wisdom and knowledge to them of understanding. Daniel then went before the king and told him what he

had dreamed, and the interpretation of it. The dream is given in Chapter 2, verses 31 to 35. Our Lesson Text then deals with the interpretation.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date of this lesson is 603 B.C.

PLACE.—Babylon.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Nebuchadnezzar, and Daniel.

Golden Text Explained

Since our Golden Text is a part of the Lesson Text it will be explained in its proper place.

Helps on the Lesson Text

Thou, O king, art king of kings. This was a high-sounding title, but it was literally true; for Nebuchadnezzar ruled several countries where he left kings, as in Judah, to rule. They were subject to him and paid tribute to him. So he was king of kings.

Unto whom the God of heaven hath given the kingdom. Daniel wished Nebuchadnezzar to remember that though he was king of kings, there was one to whom he was subject. The king was in danger of being too proud and forgetting that he had received the kingdom from God. And this he did a few years later to be turned out to eat grass and be wet with the dews of heaven, until he learned that God rules in the kingdoms of men. (Dan. 4: 31-33.)

Thou art the head of gold. The king had dreamed of a great image with a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay. This image represented all the universal kingdoms established by men. The kingdom over which Nebuchadnezzar ruled is said to have begun with Nimrod and ended with Belshazzar—2233 B.C. to 538 B.C. It was the first to exercise universal rule. It therefore occupied the place of the head. But why this kingdom was likened to gold, and the others to metals inferior to gold we are not told. Some have suggested that this kingdom excelled in splendor. Others excelled this kingdom in power, and they are represented by a metal stronger than gold, but not of such splendor and richness.

And after thee shall arise another kingdom. This kingdom was represented by the breast and arms of silver. It was to be inferior to the first kingdom, so an inferior metal is chosen to represent it. Silver is inferior in value to gold. "The kingdom here referred to was undoubtedly the Medo-Persian, established by Cyrus in the conquest of Babylon, which continued through the reigns of his successors until it was conquered by Alexander the Great. This kingdom succeeded that of Assyria, or Babylon, 538 B.C., to the overthrow of Darius Codomanus 333 years B.C. It extended, of course, through the reigns of the Persian kings, which acted so important a part in the invasion of Greece, and whose defeats have given immortality to the names of Leonidas, Aristides, Miltiades, and Themistocles, and made the names of Salamis, Thermopylae, Marathon, and Leuctra so celebrated." (Barnes.)

The inferiority of this kingdom did not consist of the amount of territory, or wealth; but probably in the character of the kings who occupied the throne, the general character of the people, its lack

of success in battles, and the "gradual weakening of its power from internal causes."

Another third kingdom of brass. This kingdom was represented by the belly and thighs of the image. And as brass is inferior to silver and gold, so this kingdom was in some ways inferior to the two kingdoms preceding. It is not to be supposed that the kingdom was inferior in every respect, for brass and iron are stronger than silver and gold; so it is known that in military power and the power to govern these last two, and especially the fourth, were stronger than the first two.

This was the Grecian kingdom under Alexander the Great, usually called the Macedonian empire. It had its beginning in 333 B.C. (some say 331 B.C.) But Alexander the Great died in 323 B.C., and his kingdom was divided among his generals. "The Seleucidae who reigned in Syria, and the Lagidae who reigned in Egypt, might be designed particularly by the two thighs of brass. Of all Alexander's successors they might be pointed out alone, because they alone had much connection with the Jewish church and nation. But their kingdom was no more a different kingdom from that of Alexander, than the parts differ from the whole. It was the same government still continued. They who governed were still Macedonians." (Newton.)

As proof that these divisions of Alexander's kingdom were not the fourth kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar's dream the following is submitted: (1) They are represented by the same metal as Alexander's kingdom. There are four kingdoms represented by the image, and there are four metals. If these divisions of the third kingdom be made the fourth kingdom, or world power, there would be a change in the metal representing them. (2) If these divisions be called the fourth kingdom, we will look for the establishment of the kingdom of heaven; and there is no event during the life of these divisions which can lay claim to being that. (3) The fourth kingdom was to be stronger than the preceding kingdoms, and it is well known that these divisions of Alexander's kingdom were not as strong as Babylon, or Rome which followed. (4) The fourth kingdom was to be divided into ten divisions, as suggested by the toes of the image, and there was never a time when these divisions were so divided. (5) "There is one insuperable objection against the kingdoms of the Lagidae and of the Seleucidae being a different kingdom of that of Alexander, because if they are not considered as parts of Alexander's kingdom, they cannot be counted as one kingdom, they constitute properly two separate and distinct kingdoms." (Newton.)

And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron. This fourth kingdom was Rome. Roman rule began in 30 B.C. when Octavius Caesar defeated Antony and Cleopatra at Actium. The fourth kingdom was characterized by strength, and so was represented by iron. Rome is the only nation with universal rule such a description would fit. It is also the only nation during whose existence any event occurred which can be accepted as the cutting out of the little stone and the establishment of the kingdom of heaven. It is also the only kingdom which had sufficient divisions bearing such relations to each other as will fit the description given of the image as having feet of iron and clay. As to the strength of this kingdom Gibbon says, "The arms of the republic, sometimes vanquished in battle, always victorious in war, advanced with rapid steps to the Euphrates, the

Danube, the Rhine, and the ocean; and the images of gold, or silver, or brass that might serve to represent the nations and their kings, were successively broken by the iron monarchy of Rome." (Barnes.)

Shall mingle themselves with the seed of men. This was to be one characteristic of that fourth kingdom, Rome. This "would therefore denote some intermingling of an inferior race with the original stock; some union, alliance, under the one sovereignty, which should greatly weaken it as a whole, though the original strength was great. . . . This foreign admixture in the empire would be a constant source of weakness, and would constantly tend to division and fraction, for such elements could never harmonize." (Barnes.) This was represented in the image by the iron and clay of which the feet were composed. And as iron and clay will not mix or adhere to each other, so this fourth kingdom was to have elements that would not mix. Rome conquered faster than she could assimilate. She brought cities, districts, and nations under her rule with no more than a division of soldiers to keep peace and collect taxes. Thus Romans were "confounded with millions of servile provincials, who had received the name, without adopting the spirit, of Romans."

And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom. The term those kings, has given some trouble. Does this mean the days of all the kings represented by the image? or in the days of the kings of the fourth power? The Authorized Version has these, and the American Standard Version has those.

But there should be no trouble regardless of whether these or those be correct. We read, "It came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine." (Ruth 1: 1.) When the judges ruled. Was there a famine during the reign of all the judges? The famine was between the time the first judge began and the last judge ceased to rule. So in the days of those kings is to be taken to mean between the time the first began and the last ceased to rule. But it is historically accurate to say in the days of the kings of the fourth kingdom, and that is likely what Daniel intended to teach.

1. This kingdom was not to be set up by men, nor by the force of arms. It was to be established by the God of heaven. It was to be set up during the reign of a universal kingdom. One universal world power cannot be established during the time of another universal kingdom; one must overthrow the other to be established. This suggests something of the nature of this kingdom to be set up by the God of heaven. Though it was to be established in the earth and to operate on this earth, its establishment did not require the overturning of the present world power. Though it was to destroy the then ruling world power, the overturning and destruction of it was not essential to the establishment of the new kingdom. So we conclude that the kingdom of heaven to be set up was not a world power on a par with that of the four world powers represented by the image.

2. This kingdom of heaven was to be small in its beginning, and then grow to fill the whole earth. (Verses 34, 35.)

3. This kingdom of heaven shall never be destroyed, nor its sovereignty left to another. Five different powers have tried to destroy it—the Roman government, religious persecution, human philosophies and traditions, the world of science, and the ridicule of all these enemies. But the kingdom still stands.

4. This kingdom is to destroy the image representing world power. This was to be done gradually, though some take verse 34 to mean

that the destruction was to be done instantly and violently. But such interpretation is contrary to the spirit and genius of the kingdom. As to the manner in which its work was to be done Barnes suggests, (a) In regard to the methods in which governments are founded. (b) In regard to the rights of the people. (c) In regard to oppression.

5. This kingdom is not to have a successor. The kingdoms represented by the image had successors, but not this fifth universal power. The kingdom of heaven did not come in contact with three of the kingdoms. How then could it destroy them? By destroying that which was the essential nature of them—world-wide power and dominion. Prophecy mongers are saying Russia will be the next great world power. "Unless and until some power can overthrow the kingdom the God of heaven set up in the days of those kings, there will not be another world-wide kingdom." The more the principles of the kingdom of God spread and are accepted and enjoyed by the people of the earth, the less possibility will there be of another world-wide temporal power.

That the church of Christ, established on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30, is that kingdom Daniel predicted we may be sure for many reasons. (1) John the Baptist came saying the kingdom is at hand. (Matt. 3: 2.) (2) Jesus said, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." (Mark 1: 15.) (3) Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church, and . . . I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 16: 18, 19.) (4) Jesus said some living would not die until they saw the kingdom come with power. (Mark 9: 1.) (5) Just before his ascension his disciples asked him if he would restore the kingdom at that time. He told them it was not for them to know the time, but they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them. (Acts 1: 8.) (6) The Holy Spirit came upon them on Pentecost. (Acts 2.) The kingdom was to come with power; the power was to come with the Spirit; therefore the kingdom was to come when the Spirit came. The Spirit came on Pentecost; therefore the kingdom came on Pentecost. (7) Ever afterwards we read of the kingdom being in actual existence. People were translated into it. (Col. 1: 13.) They were receiving the kingdom. (Heb. 12: 28.) And John was a brother in the kingdom. (Rev. 1: 9.)

The Lord's Supper is to be eaten in the kingdom. (Luke 22: 28-30.) The supper is to be eaten in the church. (1 Cor. 11: 18-26.) Unless the supper is to be eaten in two institutions, we conclude that the kingdom is the church. The supper was to be eaten in the kingdom from Pentecost to the second coming of Christ. (Acts 2: 42; 1 Cor. 11: 26.) Therefore the kingdom is to exist during that period of time, at which time Jesus will deliver up the kingdom to God the Father. (1 Cor. 15: 23-25.)

Christ is head over the church. (Eph. 1: 22; Col. 1: 18.) He is king of the kingdom. (Acts 2: 30-36.) Unless he rules over two institutions, in both of which the supper is observed, the church and kingdom are the same institution. We are translated into the kingdom. (Col. 1: 13.) We are added to the church. (Acts 2: 41, 47.) Unless we are members of two separate institutions serving the same ends and purposes, the church and kingdom are the same. Since the church had its beginning on Pentecost, and the church and kingdom are the same, we conclude that the kingdom began on Pentecost.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
What is said in our lesson of Daniel and his writings?
Discuss the context of this lesson, and the historical background.
By what title did Daniel call Nebuchadnezzar?
Did Nebuchadnezzar need to be reminded that his kingdom was from God?
Describe in detail the image as the king saw it in his dream.
What part of the image represented Nebuchadnezzar?
What do you know of the second kingdom which was to rise?
What do you know of the third kingdom to arise?
Give proof that the divisions of Alexander's kingdom were not the fourth power.
When was the fourth kingdom established, and what were its characteristics?
What is the meaning of "in the days of those kings"?
What was peculiar about the establishment of the kingdom of heaven?
What does its establishment during the existence of the fourth power suggest?
What of its beginning and growth?
What of its indestructibility?
How was the kingdom to destroy the image, or world powers?
Do you believe there will ever be another temporal world power? why?
Give proof that the church established on Pentecost is the kingdom mentioned by Daniel.
What other proof do we have of the existence of the kingdom since Pentecost?
How does our membership in the church and citizenship in the kingdom help prove this?
What does this suggest as to necessity of membership in the church?

Lesson XII—September 19, 1948

QUEEN ESTHER SAVES THE NATION

The Lesson Text

Esther 4: 13-17; 8: 1-7

13 Then Môr'dĕ-cāi bade them return answer unto Ĕs'thēr, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.
14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house will perish: and who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?
15 Then Ĕs'thēr bade them return answer unto Môr'dĕ-cāi,
16 Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shu'shăn, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast in like manner; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.
17 So Môr'dĕ-cāi went his way, and did according to all that Ĕs'thēr had commanded him.

1 On that day did the king Ă-hăs-u-ē'rŭs give the house of Hā'măn the Jews' enemy unto Ĕs'thēr the queen. And Môr'dĕ-cāi came before the king; for Ĕs'thēr had told what he was unto her,

2 And the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Hā'măn, and gave it unto Môr'dĕ-cāi. And Ĕs'thēr set Môr'dĕ-cāi over the house of Hā'măn.
3 And Ĕs'thēr spake yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet, and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Hā'măn the Ā'găg-īte, and his device that he had devised against the Jews.
4 Then the king held out to Ĕs'thēr the golden sceptre. So Ĕs'thēr arose, and stood before the king.
5 And she said, If it please the king, and if I have found favor in his sight, and the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Hā'măn, the son of Hăm-mĕd'ă-thā the Ā'găg-īte, which he wrote to destroy the Jews that are in all the king's provinces:
6 For how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?
7 Then the king Ă-hăs-u-ē'rŭs said unto Ĕs'thēr the queen and to Môr'dĕ-cāi the Jew, Behold, I have given Ĕs'thēr the house of Hā'măn, and him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"* (Esther 4: 14b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Esther 9: 29-32.

Daily Bible Readings

September 13. M.....Queen Vashti Deposed (Esther 1: 9-22)
September 14. T.....Esther, a Candidate for Queen (Esther 2: 1-13)
September 15. W.....Esther Chosen as Queen (Esther 2: 13-23)
September 16. T.....A Plan to Destroy the Jews (Esther 3: 7-15)
September 17. F.....Esther's Request of the King (Esther 5: 1-14)
September 18. S.....Haman Hanged on His own Gallows (Esther 7: 1-10)
September 19. S.....Jews Destroyed Their Enemies (Esther 9: 1-16)

Lesson Subject Explained

Though woman must bear a large share of the responsibility for the curse which has come upon the world for sin, she has in many ways on many occasions contributed her full share to the joy and happiness which has fallen to the lot of the human race. Countless thousands of women have made their contribution to the welfare of humanity in complete obscurity and have gone unsung and unrewarded by the world for their courage and steadfastness to duty. Others have enjoyed the privilege of rendering their services in such positions and on such occasions that their efforts could not go unnoticed and their rewards could hardly go unrecorded. Esther is among this latter group. She was raised up to a place of prominence and influence that she might render a service to her nation in its time of need. God foresaw the attempt of Haman to destroy his people, so he began years ahead of time to set in motion such influences as would take care of the situation. Esther did not just happen to be what she was and where she was when she was needed. Neither was she used as a lifeless tool for the part she played. Her courage and devotion, her willingness to sacrifice self in the interests of her people, and her charming disposition were as much her own, and came about in as much a natural way as have our dispositions. So that she deserves all the credit and praise for the contribution of the human element; while we praise God that in his providence he had made provision for such a deliverance as he effected through her.

Context of the Lesson

In the context of the first section of our lesson we learn that Ahasuerus was king of Persia, that his kingdom consisted of one

hundred twenty-seven provinces, and that Shushan was his place of residence. In the third year of his reign the king had a meeting of all the princes of these provinces, and when the business was all transacted they had a feast, and "drinking was according to the law," so all drank freely. It occurred to the king that it would be good to ask his queen, Vashti, to make a display of her beauty before that mob of drunken men, so he sent for her. But she refused to comply with the request. The king and his princes decided it would not be good to let the women of the realm know that the queen had refused to comply with the king's orders and get by with it, so they decided she should be deposed.

Then it was decided that a search should be made throughout the kingdom for one to take the place of Vashti. Many maidens were gathered, but in the final elimination Esther was chosen to be the next queen. She was put through a course of purification which lasted for one year, six months' treatment with oil of myrrh and six months with "sweet odors and with the things for the purifying of the women." Commentators do not seem to know just why so much time was consumed in the purifications, but Adam Clarke suggests the following: "Pure, wholesome, easily digested, and nourishing aliment, with the frequent use of the hot bath, continued for twelve months, the body frequently rubbed with olive oil, will in almost every case remove all that is disagreeable" in the way of strong and unpleasant body odors. Then after this year of purification it was some time before she actually became the queen. For in Esther 2: 16 we learn that it was in the seventh year of the king's reign that she became the queen, which was four years after Vashti was deposed.

It was about this time that the king promoted Haman, to whom Mordecai refused to bow. This hurt the pride of Haman and caused him to be "full of wrath." So he planned to destroy, not only Mordecai, but all the Jews, and promised the king a great sum of money if he would sign a decree that would permit the destruction of this people. When the news reached Mordecai he sat in the king's gate in sackcloth. Esther sent her faithful servant, Hathach, to know the trouble. Mordecai sent her word of all that was planned, and asked that she go to the king in the behalf of the people. But for her to go to the king without being invited might mean her death.

Between the two sections of our Lesson Text we have a record of Esther going in to the king, his reception of her, and her invitation for him and Haman to dine with her. This pleased Haman very much. But about that time the king had a sleepless night, and, while reading his records, he found that Mordecai had rendered the king a service for which he had not been rewarded. The king asked Haman what should be done to the man whom the king delighted to honor. In his pride Haman thought he was the one to be honored, so he said the man should be put on the king's horse and taken through the city with proper announcements being made. So the king told Haman to put Mordecai on the horse and make the announcements. This very much displeased Haman. The banquet of Esther followed, and when she told the king Haman was back of the plot to destroy the Jews, which were her people, he was hanged on the gallows he had prepared for the hanging of Mordecai.

The Historical Background

TIME.—Ahasuerus began to reign in Persia about 464 B.C. Our lesson begins in the third year of his reign, or 462 B.C. The selection of the queen to take the place of Vashti consumed more time than is usually supposed. The gathering of the maidens began in 461 B.C. A whole year was taken in the purification after they had been gathered. Esther was chosen as queen in 458 B.C. The destruction of the Jews was plotted by Haman in 453 B.C.

PLACE.—Shushan, the capital of the empire and sometimes called Susa, was originally capital of a country called Elam, and spoken of as being in the province of Elam in the time of Daniel. (Dan. 8: 2.) Chedorlaomer is mentioned as king of Elam in the days of Abraham. (Gen. 14: 1.) He had power to make war against other kings two thousand miles from his capital, and at one time ruled a large portion of lower Mesopotamia. The ruins of old Shushan "cover a space about six thousand feet long from east to west, by four thousand and five hundred feet broad from north to south. The circumference of the whole, exclusive of outlying and comparatively insignificant mounds, is about three miles, . . . and all the ruins are contained in a circumference of about seven miles."

PERSONS.—Ahasuerus, Vashti, Esther, Mordecai, and Haman.

Golden Text Explained

1. *God's providence intimated.* Though God's name is not mentioned one time in the book of Esther, it is easy to see that the writer was a believer in God and in the providence of God in the affairs of men. The very question of our text suggests that there was a purpose in Esther's coming to the kingdom, and that purpose could not have been hers. She could not foresee this time of danger, and had she seen it she might not have chosen to be queen. But there is one who can see into the future as he sees the past, and Mordecai is suggesting to Esther that she has been brought into her present position so that she might be able to render a service she could not possibly render without years of preparation, such as had been going on in her life during the last few years.

2. *Human agency in accomplishing God's purposes.* Though God is not of necessity dependent upon human agency in accomplishing his purposes, he does sometimes see fit to stay in the background and bring things to pass in such way that man is apt to think he was wholly responsible. From the human point of view Esther saved her nation. She happened to be in the right place; she happened to learn of the danger in time; she happened to be possessed of the proper qualities; and the king happened to be favorable towards her because of her proper attractive approach. The human agency is so easily seen and appreciated that we are liable to lose sight of the divine.

3. *Human responsibility determined by providence.* Mordecai impressed Esther with her responsibility because she was in such a place at such a time. Those are the elements which create responsibility in us today. We are where service should be rendered, at the time it is needed, and we have the ability to render the service, hence our responsibility. To know to do good and do it not, is sin. (James 4: 17.)

Helps on the Lesson Text

Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape. Esther had sent word to Mordecai that she had not been invited to see the king, and that to go uninvited likely meant death, therefore she was excusing herself from doing anything for her people. Mordecai must have thought that Esther felt safe in the king's house, and that she did not care enough for her people to expose herself to the danger involved in going to the king uninvited. So he told her there was no hope of escape if she did not do her part.

Then will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place. This is an expression of great faith. Mordecai believed God would deliver his people. It was his opinion that Esther had been brought to her position for something greater than personal reasons. She was not so elevated because of her social, political, or financial worth to the king. If her position was not that she might save her people, it was difficult to see why she had been so elevated. But God is not dependent upon any one person. And, though she had been elevated for this purpose, if she refused to accept the responsibility, God could raise up hundreds if necessary to do his bidding.

But thou and thy father's house will perish. Was this an empty threat with nothing Mordecai had read or observed to support it? Does this not imply the existence of God, and his execution of justice in the earth? If from some other source God brings deliverance to the Jews, that deliverance will do Esther no good; she will perish for not being willing to expose herself to danger for the sake of her people. So when we refuse to accept responsibilities and leave our duties undone, God will raise up others to do the work he has purposed to be done, but we will suffer for not doing it.

Fast ye for me, . . . three days. This is another indication that Esther and Mordecai were very religious. Prayer usually accompanies fasting, and no doubt Mordecai and the Jews he gathered spent the time praying for Esther that she might be acceptable to the king, and might in the best way possible effect their deliverance. Being for three days, this was likely a complete fast; and with their lives hanging in the balance it would not be difficult for them to refrain from food two nights and one day.

And if I perish, I perish. This is the language of one who has calmly counted the cost of a venture, and has decided to pay even the supreme cost if necessary to gain the desired end. It is the language one uses when expressing determination to do one's duty even though a martyr's memory be the only reward. There is not as much faith in these words as we would like to see—not as much as we can detect in the language of Mordecai. But this expression does indicate that Esther had clearly seen her duty, and that she was willing to do that duty even if it brought death. If she was to be sacrificed in the interest of her people, she would be a willing sacrifice. It was a noble resolve.

Ahasuerus gave the house of Haman . . . unto Esther. When men were executed all their property became the property of the king. So the king gave Esther Haman's house. Though she could not give it to Mordecai, she could set him "over the house," let him live in it, which was as good as giving it to him.

Mordecai came before the king. When Esther confessed to the king that she was a Jew, she then told of her connection with Mordecai who was known to be a Jew. She was his cousin, though he had adopted and reared her. His coming before the king implies that he was given an office. And the fact that the king gave him the ring which Haman wore indicates that he was given the office formerly held by Haman.

Let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman. Esther seemed not to know that a law signed by the king could not be reversed. (verse 8.) Or she may have thought the king would make an exception in this case. But if the king made an exception in this case he would destroy his authority over his subjects, hence no exception can be made.

How can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred. We will be safe in suggesting that Esther's kindred meant a lot more to her after she sacrificed herself for them than they had ever meant before. One way to create an interest in others is to do something for them. One way to love others is to make sacrifices for them. One way to overlook the injuries done by others is to pray for them. The more brethren give to missions, the more interest they will have in the welfare of the lost. Yes, and that increased interest will cause us to do more for them. But where there is no love for or interest in the lost, doing something for them will generate the interest and love we need to enable us to do the full measure of our duty towards them.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

This lesson is rich in material for these departments. Stories for them to tell, and which they will enjoy telling over and over. Esther did not have the blessings of a home with her parents, like most children. But in spite of her handicaps she gained a place of honor, and was able to perform a great service to her people. The fact that she was an orphan can be used to catch the interest of the children because of their unusual interest in orphans, and their sympathy for homeless children. This story can be used to encourage orphan children, and those whose parents are poor. Opportunities for service to God come to the poor and homeless as well as to others. None are too poor to serve God, and none are so rich that they do not need to serve God.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Children in these departments are attracted by courage and accomplishments in the face of great dangers and difficulties. This story of Esther saving her people furnishes plenty of material to satisfy their demands in a character along these lines. These children in the hero-worshiping age need to be pointed to Bible heroes worthy of their love and admiration. Too many have ballplayers, movie actors and actresses, and politicians as their heroes. Not many young people rise above their heroes. So it is the duty of the teacher to present Bible characters in such light and with such force that these boys and girls will hold these men and women of God as their heroes. And the teacher should impress them with the idea that the day of opportunities is not past. While none may be selected as king

or queen, they still have opportunities to serve God daily, and a failure to see and use the opportunity may bring the displeasure of God upon us.

Young People and Adult Departments

By giving an orphan girl a home and proper training Mordecai rendered his nation a great service. There is no greater service to be rendered in these days than to give the church and the nation boys and girls properly reared. The humility of Esther in her new position recommends Mordecai as one who did his job of child rearing well. Parents who neglect their duty along this line may have cause to regret it in days to come.

Topics for Discussion

1. Compare Esther with Moses. Each was in the court of the king. Each was free from that to which their people were exposed. Both loved their people enough to identify themselves with them. And both were willing to suffer whatever befell their people.

2. The feast of Purim which was instituted to celebrate the salvation of the Jews by Esther (Esther 9: 26-28,) is proof that these things actually happened. The Lord's Supper is proof of the events which it celebrates. No monument was ever erected to celebrate an event which never actually occurred.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you learn from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
What part did woman have in bringing sorrow upon the world?
Mention some women who have rendered great service to the world.
Discuss the context of the lesson.
What is your estimate of the characters of Ahasuerus? Haman? Mordecai?
Discuss the time, place, and persons of this lesson.
How is the providence of God suggested in the Golden Text?
Discuss the element of human agency in the text.
What of the element of responsibility suggested in the text?
What did Mordecai think of Esther's willingness to serve?
Did Mordecai think deliverance of the Jews depended wholly on Esther?
What would be the punishment if she refused to serve her people?
What request did she make of the Jews when she went to the king? Why?
What is implied in the language "If I perish, I perish"?
What was Esther's reward for her service?
What was Mordecai's promotion?
What request did Esther then make of the king?
Did the king grant the request? Why?
What statement of Esther's showed her interest in the welfare of her people?
Did she have this much interest before the time of this lesson? Why?

Lesson XIII—September 26, 1948

INFLUENCE OF THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

The Lesson Text

Dan. 9: 3-11

3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.

4 And I prayed unto Jē-hō'văh my God, and made confession, and said, Oh, Lord, the great and dreadful God, who keepeth covenant and lovingkindness with them that love him and keep his commandments,

5 We have sinned, and have dealt perversely, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even turning aside from thy precepts and from thine ordinances;

6 Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, that spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

7 O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of face, as at this day; to the men of Jū'dăh, and to the inhabitants of Jē-ru'sā-lĕm, and unto all Ĭs'rā-ĕl, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee.

8 O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.

9 To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness; for we have rebelled against him;

10 Neither have we obeyed the voice of Jē-hō'văh our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.

11 Yea, all Ĭs'rā-ĕl have transgressed thy law, even turning aside, that they should not obey thy voice: therefore hath the curse been poured out upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Mō'sēs the servant of God; for we have sinned against him.

Ezek. 14: 1-6

1 Then came certain of the elders of Ĭs'rā-ĕl unto me, and sat before me.

2 And the word of Jē-hō'văh came unto me, saying,

3 Son of man, these men have taken their idols into their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them?

4 Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jē-hō'văh: Every man of the house of Ĭs'rā-ĕl that taketh his idols into his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I Jē-hō'văh will answer him therein according to the multitude of his idols;

5 That I may take the house of Ĭs'rā-ĕl in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols.

6 Therefore say unto the house of Ĭs'rā-ĕl, Thus saith the Lord Jē-hō'văh: Return ye, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I may learn thy statutes."* (Psalm 119: 71.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 137: 1-9.

Daily Bible Readings

September 20.	M.	The Promise of a Return (Deut. 30: 1-10)
September 21.	T.	The Promise of a New Heart (Ezek. 36: 22-31)
September 22.	W.	The Renewal for Jehovah's Sake (Ezek 36: 32-38)
September 23.	T.	Jeremiah Predicts a Return (Jer. 50: 17-20)
September 24.	F.	Sin the Cause of the Captivity (Neh. 9: 26-31)
September 25.	S.	God Acknowledged to Be Just (Neh. 9: 32-38)
September 26.	S.	Solemn Promise to Keep the Law (Neh. 10: 32-39)

Lesson Subject Explained

"The exile was a period of change in the vernacular language of the Jews (see Neh. 8: 8) and in the national character. The Jews

who returned were remarkably free from the old sin of idolatry: a great spiritual renovation, in accordance with the divine promise (Ezek. 36: 24-28,) was wrought in them. A new and deep feeling of reverence for at least the letter of the law and the institutions of Moses was probably the result of the religious service which was performed in the synagogues. At the same time their theosophical and demonological views were developed by their contact with oriental systems, and perhaps by the polemics thereby engendered, and especially by their review of their own religious resources, and of their more careful study of the didactic portions of the Old Testament scriptures; certain it is that from this period we can date not only a fuller angelology, but also more philosophical distinctions, and in particular a more distinct recognition of the great doctrines of the immortality of the soul, and even of the resurrection of the body, which we subsequently find so unquestioned by the orthodox Pharisees. All of this was the natural consequence of the absence of the ritual services of the temple, which brought out the more spiritual elements of Mosaism, and thus was the nation better prepared for the dispensation of the gospel. A new impulse of commercial enterprise and activity was also implanted in them, and developed in the days of the Dispersion, which they have continued to feel even to the present time. In fine, an innovation was effected upon the narrow and one-sided notions of Judaism by the associations of the exile, which, although it resulted in the defection of many from the national faith (but of these few cared to return to their native land,) yet—like the earlier sojourn in Egypt (with which, in the glowing pictures of prophecy, it was often compared)—ended in the colonization of Palestine with a fresh and more thoroughly cultured population, yet more scrupulously devoted than ever to the theocratic cultus, who volunteered with pious zeal to lay anew the foundations of the Hebrew polity." (McClintock and Strong, *Encyclopedia.)*

Context of the Lesson

The chapters in the book of Daniel are not arranged in chronological order. Chapter one relates things which happened in 603 B.C., and then the following chapters bring matters of interest down to 537 B.C. until we reach chapter seven. This goes back to the first year of Belshazzar's reign, about 555 B.C. The events of chapter eight are slightly later. But those of chapter nine come back to 538 B.C. probably one year before he was cast into the den of lions.

Daniel had been in captivity about sixty-five years at the time of our lesson. He had been reading books which dealt with the captivity and the time they were to be in captivity for he said, "In the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years whereof the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah the prophet for the accomplishing of the desolations of Jerusalem, even seventy years." The writings of Jeremiah had been collected and put in book form and distributed among the exiles for their instruction and encouragement. The number of years the Jews were to spend in captivity are given in Jer. 25: 12 and 29: 10. Since Daniel had been in captivity sixty-five years he knew that the time for the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy could not be far in the future. But since there were several deportations of the Jews, Daniel may not have

been sure when to begin the count of seventy. Scholars today are divided on the matter.

The second section of our Lesson Text was written by Ezekiel before the overthrow of Jerusalem; it preceded the fall of the city some six or eight years. Part of this prophet's writing was directed to those still in Jerusalem, and this is true of the context of our lesson. He denounces both the prophets and prophetesses who were saying that the city was in no danger of being destroyed, and that peace would soon come. "Because with lies ye have grieved the heart of the righteous, whom I have not made sad, and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, and be saved alive; therefore ye shall no more see false visions, nor divine divinations: and I will deliver my people out of your hand: and ye shall know that I am Jehovah."

The Historical Background

TIME.—538 B.C. for Daniel; 594 B.C. for Ezekiel.
PLACES.—Shushan for Daniel; by the river Chebar for Ezekiel.
PERSONS.—Jehovah, Daniel, Ezekiel, and Israel in captivity.

Golden Text Explained

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted." Many people have the idea that the most unfortunate person on earth is the one most afflicted; that affliction is a misfortune. Such ideas prevailed in the days of Job. His friends accused him of some great sin on the ground that he was enduring great suffering. Their philosophy was that the righteous are always well and prosperous; but the wicked are bound to suffer. There was some truth in their philosophy. The wicked do suffer for their sins. But sometimes the righteous man also suffers that they may become partakers of the holiness of God, that they may become stronger, and that they may be able to comfort others in sorrow. (Heb. 12: 5-11.)

David realized that there was good in affliction for him that he might learn the statutes of the Lord. In times of sorrow and affliction people turn to the Bible for comfort and strength, and while reading they learn other things the Lord would have them do. Affliction, beyond the help of man to remedy, will teach us to lean upon and trust in the Lord; and being delivered from our afflictions we learn to appreciate the goodness of God and so love him more fervently than we could ever have loved him without the affliction.

David also said, "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I observe thy word." Prosperity causes people to forget God, and too much business leaves no time for work and worship at home or in the house of worship. One man prayed, "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me: lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is Jehovah? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and use profanely the name of my God." (Prov. 30: 8, 9.)

Affliction is a great teacher. First, it teaches that the way of the transgressor is hard. (Prov. 13: 15.) It is a merciful act on the part of God to bring affliction upon us so that we may learn this lesson in this life while there is time to depart from sin and be saved in heaven. If we had no chance to learn the lesson before the judgment, there would be no opportunity to profit by the lesson learned. Next,

affliction teaches us to love and appreciate Jesus Christ who suffered so much in our place. (Isa. 53.) He was afflicted on account of our sins, to make it possible for God to forgive us when we turn to him and ask forgiveness. And, last, the suffering of afflictions will make it possible for us to enjoy heaven all the more. "For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." (2 Cor. 4: 17.) On this verse Barnes says, "The effect of these afflictions is to produce eternal glory. This they do, (1) By their tendency to wean us from the world; (2) To purify the heart, by enabling us to break off from the sins on account of which God afflicts us; (3) By disposing us to look to God for consolation and support in our trials; (4) By inducing us to contemplate the glories of the heavenly world, and thus winning us to seek heaven as our home; and (5) Because God has graciously promised to reward his people in heaven as the result of their bearing trials in this life. It is by affliction that he purifies them (Isa. 48: 10); and by trial that he takes their affections from the objects of time and sense, and gives them a relish for the enjoyments which result from the prospects of perfect and eternal glory." (Barnes *Notes.*)

Helps on the Lesson Text

I set my face unto the Lord God. It is likely that Daniel means he turned his face towards Jerusalem, as is suggested by the fact that he had his house arranged so his windows opened towards Jerusalem. (Dan. 6: 10.) Daniel made use of all he had at his command to gain the ends desired—prayer, supplication, fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

And I prayed . . . and made confession. Daniel was not confessing personal sins, but those of the nation. But before his prayer he acknowledged the goodness and justness of God, and the fact that God keeps his promises and shows loving-kindness to all who love him and keep his commandments.

Even turning aside from thy precepts and . . . ordinances. It should be noticed that turning aside from the precepts and ordinances of Jehovah is characterized in the preceding phrases as sinned, dealt perversely, done wickedly, and have rebelled. Some people think turning from the word of the Lord to do something "just as good," or something the Lord would be "unreasonable to object to," is of very little consequence. But Daniel said they had sinned, dealt perversely, done wickedly, and had rebelled in turning from God's word.

Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets. This was one of the sins of the nation. God sent prophets, but they treated them roughly, even killing some of them. The prophets who pointed out their sins and told them they would suffer for them were the especial objects of their hatred. (Jer. 44: 4, 5.) But the prophets who prophesied peace, they loved. Now Daniel confesses this to be a sin. People have not ceased to sin in this manner.

To us belongeth confusion of face. This expression means shame, embarrassment. They once were a proud people, now they are humbled; they were once independent among the nations, but now they are slaves in a foreign land; they once boasted that they were the people of God and that he would care for them and defend them against the enemy, but now they are forsaken by the Lord and allowed to be enslaved. It was cause for shame. With this feeling

and this condition Daniel contrasts the righteousness of the Lord. He is righteous, but we are confused.

Therefore hath the curse been poured out upon us. It will be remembered that the aim of the lessons of this quarter is to teach the folly of disobedience and the fearful consequences of sin. Here Daniel confesses that the curse poured out upon the people is because "we have sinned against him." And they sinned in that they did not follow the word of the Lord as delivered to them by faithful prophets. The churches should take this lesson to heart, and listen to the preacher who preaches the word in purity, even though it does condemn us and make us see our sins.

Then came unto me certain elders. It should be kept in mind that this occurred in the first part of the captivity of the Jews, while idolatry was prevalent among them. These elders who came to Ezekiel were idolaters, and they came not to gain truth, but to entrap the prophet and perhaps to have something whereby to accuse him before the king.

These men have taken their idols into their heart. This shows that they were idolaters. And this constituted a stumbling block before them. Regardless of any outward sign of devotion to Jehovah, the presence of the idol in the heart was enough to bring about their fall and condemnation.

Taketh his idols into his heart, . . . and cometh to the prophet. Adam Clarke suggests that what the prophet here mentioned is the false prophet; that the idolater goes to a false prophet knowing his sins will not be exposed, and thus in a fashion he has the sanction of religion. This makes very good sense, and may be the meaning. But that is not what has happened in this instance. These were idolaters and they had come to Ezekiel, a true prophet. They are so bold as to hold an idol in their hearts and come to seek the sanction of God's prophet; not his sanction of their idolatry, of course, but hiding what was in their heart they would inquire of God through his prophet concerning various matters. They were the enemies of God seeking the guidance of God through his prophet. Hypocrites of the first order!

That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart. The word take is to be understood as to discover; that I may reveal them as to what they are in their hearts, and that because they are estranged, alienated, on account of their idolatry.

Turn yourselves from your idols. This is the fervent appeal of Jehovah to his people who have idolatrous hearts. The face of the Lord must be against the idolater, and he shall be "an astonishment, for a sign and a proverb." And verses 10, 11 of this chapter express the hope that "Israel may go no more astray from me, neither defile themselves any more with all their transgressions."

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Prayer had a large place in the life of Daniel. Children should be taught to pray; they should be taught how to pray. Teachers have a fine opportunity here to show them that great men were prayerful men, and prayed regularly; Daniel prayed three times a day, and every day. It would be difficult for a teacher to make a greater contribution to a child than to lead that child to form the habit of praying daily.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Men do not become too great in national affairs to humble themselves in prayer before God. These boys and girls are in that period of life when they are likely to think it effeminate and weak to pray; and they may discontinue the habit of prayer taught them earlier in life. If teachers can lead them to hold on to those prayer habits for a few years they will render these boys and girls a great service.

A person may be an idolater and never have a piece of wood, or stone, or metal carved and placed on a shelf or mantel. That which is loved most and to which we give the best and most of our life is our idol. How many idolaters do you have in your class? If there is one, or more, and you help them discover their idolatry you will have performed a great service.

Young People and Adult Departments

Daniel confessed the sins of the people, and, though he was not guilty, he did not exempt himself. Contrast him with the Pharisee who stood and prayed with himself. (Luke 18: 11.) The Pharisee distinguished himself from the publican, and wished the Lord to keep in mind the difference. But Daniel left such matters with the Lord. This is true humility, and self-forgetfulness in a matter which concerned the nation.

Are there hypocrites in the class who have idols in their hearts, yet come to church, as those of Ezekiel's day came to the prophet? Are they determined to hold one idol in their heart, and yet seek the favor of God? Would they serve God with reservation? Reserving one sphere of action, one portion of the heart for the idol?

Topics for Discussion

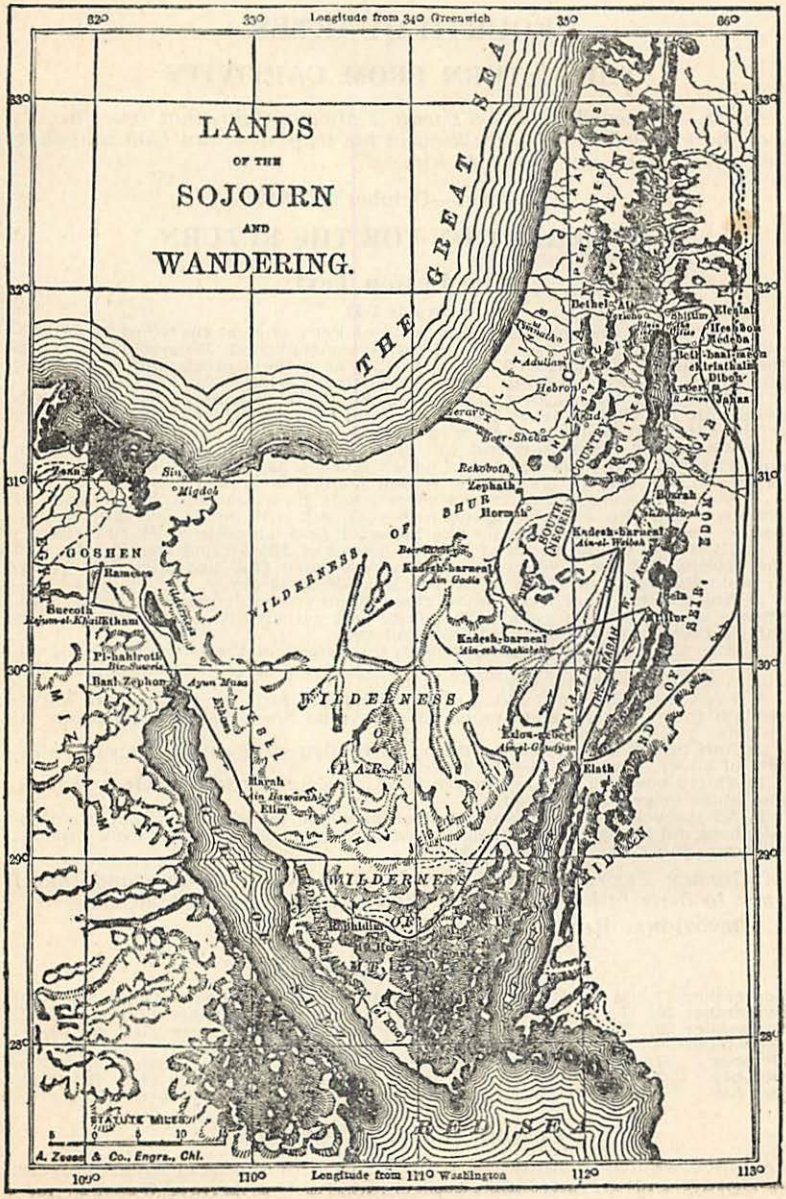
1. Does God bring physical suffering and poverty on people today as in the days of old as punishment for their sins? Does God bring afflictions upon people to keep them in the paths of righteousness?

2. Israel learned a fine lesson in her captivity, but it would have been far better if she had never needed to learn that lesson. Paul learned a fine lesson in his opposition to God and persecution of the church, but he would have been a better man and God would have been honored far more if he had never been a persecutor of the church. So it is better not to go off in digression or immorality than it is to go off and suffer, even though such suffering can be used to advantage. The advantage gained never pays for the dishonor done the name of God, nor for the harm the sin does the person.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
Name some of the changes in the Jews wrought by the captivity.
What material advantages were gained by the captivity?
How did Daniel know the end of the captivity was near?
Discuss the historical background.
Is suffering always an indication of sin in the person suffering?
What good did David say would come from his suffering?
What is the danger of prosperity, and of too great poverty?
What does affliction teach us?

How do afflictions bring us an eternal weight of glory?
What did Daniel do when he set his face unto the Lord?
In what ways did the people turn from the precepts of God?
What was their attitude towards the prophets?
Is there a danger the church will do that today?
What is meant by confusion of face, and what caused it?
What do you know of the characters of the men who visited Ezekiel?
What was God's plea to the idolaters?


LANDS
OF THE
SOJOURN
AND
WANDERING.
Longitude from 34° Greenwich
Longitude from 111° Washington
THE GREAT SEA
Bethel
Ai
Jericho
Shittim
Heshbon
Medeba
Beth-baal-meon
Kiriathaim
Dibon
Jahaz
Adullam
Hebron
Arad
Beer-Sheba
Rehoboth
Zephath
Hormah
Kadesh-barnea
Ain-el-Weibah
Kadesh-barnea
Ain Gadis
Kadesh-barnea
Ain-esh-Shebeke
Ezion-geber
Elath
Sela
Bozrah
Zoar
Sin
Migdol
GOSHEN
Rameses
Succoth
Rejum-el-Khail
Etham
Pi-hahiroth
Bir-Suweris
Baal-Zephon
Ayun Musa
Marah
Ain Hawarah
Elim
Rephidim
Mt. Horeb
Mt. Sinai
WILDERNESS OF SHUR
WILDERNESS OF PARAN
WILDERNESS OF SIN
SOUTH (NEGEB)
THE ARABAH
LAND OF EDOM
MIDIAN
RED SEA
STATUTE MILES
A. Zeese & Co., Engrs., Chi.

FOURTH QUARTER

THE RETURN FROM CAPTIVITY

AIM.—*To teach that God's way is always right, that true success may be enjoyed only by walking in his way, and that God will save and bless when one turns to him.*

Lesson I—October 3, 1948

PREPARATION FOR THE RETURN

The Lesson Text

Ezra 1: 1-11

1 Now in the first year of Çȳ'rŭs king of Pĕr'sĭ-ȧ, that the word of Jĕ-hō'-văh by the mouth of Jĕr-ĕ-mī'ăh might be accomplished, Jĕ-hō'văh stirred up the spirit of Çȳ'rŭs king of Pĕr'sĭ-ȧ, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and *put it* also in writing, saying,

2 Thus saith Çȳ'rŭs king of Pĕr'sĭ-ȧ, All the kingdoms of the earth hath Jĕ-hō'văh, the God of heaven, given me; and he hath charged me to build him a house in Jĕ-ru'sȧ-lĕm, which is in Jū'dăh.

3 Whosoever there is among you of all his people, his God be with him, and let him go up to Jĕ-ru'sȧ-lĕm, which is in Jū'dăh, and build the house of Jĕ-hō'văh, the God of Ĭs'rȧ-ĕl (he is God), which is in Jĕ-ru'sȧ-lĕm.

4 And whosoever is left, in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the freewill-offering for the house of God which is in Jĕ-ru'sȧ-lĕm.

5 Then rose up the heads of fathers' *houses* of Jū'dăh and Bĕn'jȧ-mĭn, and the priests, and the Lē'vĭtes, even all whose spirit God had stirred to go up to build the house of Jĕ-hō'văh which is in Jĕ-ru'sȧ-lĕm.

6 And all they that were round about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, besides all that was willingly offered.

7 Also Çȳ'rŭs the king brought forth the vessels of the house of Jĕ-hō'văh, which Nĕb-ū-chăd-nĕz'zär had brought forth out of Jĕ-ru'sȧ-lĕm, and had put in the house of his gods;

8 Even those did Çȳ'rŭs king of Pĕr'sĭ-ȧ bring forth by the hand of Mĭth'-rĕ-dăth the treasurer, and numbered them unto Shĕsh-băz'zär, the prince of Jū'dăh.

9 And this is the number of them: thirty platters of gold, a thousand platters of silver, nine and twenty knives,

10 Thirty bowls of gold, silver bowls of a second sort four hundred and ten, and other vessels a thousand.

11 All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Shĕsh-băz'zär bring up, when they of the captivity were brought up from Băb'ȳ-lŏn unto Jĕ-ru'sȧ-lĕm.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"*I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.*" (Jer. 30: 3b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Jer. 29: 10-14.

Daily Bible Readings

September 27.	M.	Return Predicted by Moses (Deut. 30: 1-10)
September 28.	T.	Babylon Punished for Captivity (Jer. 25: 12-26)
September 29.	W.	Cyrus Predicted as Deliverer (Isa. 44: 21-28)
September 30.	T.	Cyrus Commissioned to Deliver (Isa. 45: 1-7)
October 1.	F.	Proclamation of Return by Cyrus (2 Chron. 36: 17-23)
October 2.	S.	Isaiah Foretells Deliverance (Isa. 48: 12-22)
October 3.	S.	Greater Deliverance Pictured by Return (Isa. 52: 1-15)

Lesson Subject Explained

Since we are to study the book of Ezra for the next several weeks it will be well to note what a prominent author has said of the pur-

pose of the book. This author concludes "that the object and plan of the author must have been to collect only such facts and documents as might show the manner in which the Lord God, after the lapse of seventy years of exile, fulfilled his promise announced by the prophets, by the deliverance of his people from Babylon, the building of the temple at Jerusalem, and the restoration of the temple worship according to the law, and preserved the reassembled community from fresh relapses into heathen customs and idolatrous worship by the dissolution of the marriages with Gentile women. Moreover, the restoration of the temple and of the legal temple worship, and the separation of the heathen from the newly settled community, were necessary and indispensable conditions for the gathering out of the people of God from among the heathen, and for the maintenance and continued existence of the nation of Israel, to which and through which God might at his own time fulfill and realize his promises to their forefathers, to make their seed a blessing to all the families of the earth, in a manner consistent both with his dealings with his people hitherto, and with the further development of his promises made through the prophets. The significance of the book of Ezra in sacred history lies in the fact that it enables us to perceive how the Lord, on the one hand, so disposed the hearts of the kings of Persia, the then rulers of the world, that in spite of all the machinations of the enemies of God's people, they promoted the building of his temple in Jerusalem, and the maintenance of his worship therein; and on the other, raised up for his people, when delivered from Babylon, men like Zerubbabel their governor, Joshua the high priest, and Ezra the scribe, who, supported by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, undertook the work to which they were called, with hearty resolution, and carried it out with a powerful hand." (*Preachers' Homiletic Commentary.*)

Context of the Lesson

During the seventy years of exile, as we have learned, the Jews were broken from their inclinations to idolatry. "Henceforward through all their future, they and their descendants were fierce monotheists, haters of all idols." But this was not all the change being brought about within this people. Being separated from their temple they became less formal and more spiritual in their worship. And their sufferings and their longings for the land and the temple which God gave them led them to read their scriptures more than they had ever done before. This contributed to their growth spiritually, and helped to cure them of their idolatry. And anything which causes people to study the word of God today is good for them, though they may not be able to appreciate it at the present.

And the exile was a sifting experience which preserved the best of the people for the replanting in Palestine. Nebuchadnezzar sifted them for the best and strongest mentally and physically when he took them into captivity; he left the weak and aged behind. Then when Cyrus allowed them to return it was on a voluntary basis; no one was forced to return. This time it was those whose love for God and the work and purpose of God moved them to endure the hardships of the return and rebuilding who were sifted from among those who had learned to love Babylon and the material things of life. So Canaan was resettled by people who were deeply religious, who knew something of God's purposes, and who were willing to suffer

to help accomplish those purposes. "Some one said that in looking for seed to plant New England three centuries ago the Lord sifted two kingdoms (England and Holland) for the best they had. With equal truth it may be said that the Lord of Providence, on the same wise principle, sifted the Jewish people twice over to get out the best seed for replanting the land of promise." (Cowles.)

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date of this lesson is 536 B.C.

PLACE.—Babylon.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Cyrus, and captive Israelites.

Golden Text Explained

"I will cause them to return to the land." The word them of our text refers not only to the captives of the kingdom of Judah, but also to those of the kingdom of Israel. The first part of the verse reads, "For, lo, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will turn again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith Jehovah; and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers." Ezekiel made a statement which many scholars think refers to a return of a part of the people of the first captivity in Ezek. 37: 15-28. God told the prophet to take two sticks, one for Israel and one for Judah. The prophet was to join these sticks in the sight of the people, and then explain the meaning of the procedure. And the meaning was that God would bring back such captives as wished to return from both captivities, "And I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all; neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, . . . nor with any of their transgressions." There are parts of this prophecy which reach to the time of Christ (Verse 24), and it is possible that a literal return of any of the kingdom of Israel is not meant, but it looks as if the prophecy was intended to have first its literal fulfillment, and then a second and spiritual fulfillment in the church as the Israel of God under king David, who is Christ. There were representatives of practically all the tribes in the time of Jesus, but whether they were descendants of some of the returned exiles of the ten tribes, or whether they were descendants of some of those tribes left in the land we have no way of knowing. And Jeremiah goes on in this prophecy to point to the time when David shall be the king of all his people, both of Israel and of Judah. (Jer. 30: 9.)

There are those who claim that no part of the ten tribes have ever returned, and therefore this prophecy has yet to be fulfilled. Ezra says there were forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty people who returned. He gives the number of the different families who returned, and when these are added we have the sum of twenty-nine thousand eight hundred and eighteen. That leaves twelve thousand five hundred and forty-two people to be accounted for. Who were they? Several conservative scholars think these were exiles of the kingdom of Israel mentioned by both Jeremiah and Ezekiel as suggested above. If that be true, these prophecies have had their literal fulfillment. If this is not true, the prophecies must be looked upon as having only a spiritual fulfillment in the church

under Christ (as David, for he was the son of David), and the only fulfillment they are ever to have. For according to the New Testament teaching there can be no restoration of the Jews to their land, no restoration of the law and ceremonies of Judaism, and no middle wall of partition again erected to undo what our Lord accomplished in his death on the cross. (Eph. 2: 14-18; Col. 2: 13-15.) Christ is to remain where he is at the right hand of God interceding for us until the time of his second coming. (Acts 3: 21; Heb. 9: 23-28.) And after his second coming there is no time for the return of the ten tribes to possess the land of Canaan. That is the end. (1 Cor. 15: 23, 24.) That is time for judgment of all nations. (Matt. 25: 31-46; 2 Thess. 1: 6-10.) And from that judgment the wicked will go away into everlasting punishment; and the righteous will go away to everlasting life. Christ will not be their king in Canaan before his coming, for he is to stay before the face of God to be our advocate; and Christ will not be their king in Canaan, or anywhere else, after his second coming for the reasons stated.

Helps on the Lesson Text

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia. Cyrus was the son of Cambyses and Mandane; his mother being the daughter of Astyages, the Mede, and his father a "Persian of the royal family of the Archaemenidae." Cyrus defeated his grandfather Astyages in 559 B.C., thus taking over the Median kingdom and cementing the Medes and Persians to form his empire.

Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus. How? Daniel was still a strong influence in Babylon at this time. He had the writings of Jeremiah we know (Dan. 9: 2), which told of the return of the Jews within seventy years from the time Daniel was taken. Did he have the writings of Isaiah in which the name of Cyrus is mentioned as the deliverer? (Isa. 44: 28; 45: 1.) If so, it seems that this was about all that was needed for Daniel to make the king see that he was destined to be an instrument in the hands of God. If we may take the word of historians, the resettlement of the Jews in their land was in line with the purposes of Cyrus in overcoming the influence of a revived Egypt seeking territory to the north. These things working together would give ample explanation of the acts of Cyrus.

He hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem. How did Jehovah charge Cyrus to build the house in Jerusalem? "That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built; and of the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." (Isa. 44: 28.) If Daniel, or some other prominent Jew, did not show this to Cyrus, it would be difficult to explain how the idea was put into the mind of the king.

Whosoever . . . let him go . . . whosoever is left. This return was a voluntary matter. No one was forced to go back to Palestine. And those Jews who had apostatized and had accepted the gods of Babylon, and had become satisfied with the land of their captivity, were not the kind of material the Lord wanted to replant in his land. Only those who loved the Lord and wished to make a contribution to the accomplishment of his purposes were of the type wanted, and they would be the first to volunteer to go.

Even all whose spirit God had stirred to go up. The prophets among them, perhaps Haggai and Zechariah, and Daniel, had told

them of the approach of the end of the seventy years mentioned by Jeremiah as the duration of the captivity. In this way their spirits were stirred to go when Cyrus gave permission.

Houses of Judah, and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites. These are the divisions that constituted the kingdom of Judah. (2 Chron. 11: 1, 12, 13.) The priests were of the tribe of Levi, but on account of their special office they are mentioned separately.

They . . . strengthened their hands. There were many rich Jews in business who did not care to return. They were urged to make large contributions to help in the return. And the heathen, "men of his place," were urged to give to the Jews to help in the expense of the return. The contribution must have been liberal, for when they got to Jerusalem they were asked to give for the rebuilding of the temple, and they "gave after their ability into the treasury" an amount, which in our money, is equal to about $400,000. (Peloubet.)

Cyrus . . . brought forth the vessels of the house of Jehovah. These were the vessels which Nebuchadnezzar took when he captured and destroyed the city and temple seventy years before. (2 Chron. 36: 7.) Among these were the vessels which Belshazzar was using the night the hand appeared writing on the wall and broke up a drunken revelry. (Dan. 5.) It is a sad commentary on the condition of affairs among the people of God when it has to be said that the vessels of the temple would be in better hands in the temple of the gods of the heathen than in the temple of the God of heaven. God's people sank so low in their apostasy that they were no longer fit to be the keepers of the vessels of the sanctuary, so God gave these vessels into the hands of the heathen to put in the temple of their gods until the people of Jehovah learned their lesson. If God's people today are not faithful in the handling of his gospel, and do not preach it to all the world as he has commanded, they will cease to be the people of God and he will raise up others to do his will. God is not dependent upon any group for the doing of his work. But any group who will humbly and faithfully obey his will can be used for the accomplishment of his purposes.

All the vessels of gold and of silver. Ezra says there were fifty-four hundred of these vessels of gold and silver. But when the figures are added we find only twenty-four hundred and ninty-nine. The book of Esdras, the first of the Old Testament Apocrypha, gives an account of these vessels being returned, and says there were five thousand four hundred and sixty-nine of them. (1 Esdras 2: 13, 14.) Adam Clarke suggests that some corruption has been allowed to creep into the text at this point. And this should not be alarming to any one, nor cause any one's faith in the book to be shaken. The marvel is that so many facts and figures are handled with so few corruptions of this sort.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

The joy of going home might well be the topic for these departments. Old people who were mere children when they left Palestine were now to go back over the road they traveled long ago with their parents. Fathers and mothers have told them of the homeland, and have kept alive their desire to return. How thankful they must have been to Cyrus for being such a good king! And how thankful they

must have been to God for allowing them to live long enough to see the day they were to start, and then to come in sight of the holy land, and then to possess some of it and eat of its fruits.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The God who never forgets his promises. This might well be the topic for these departments. Moses told them what would happen if they disobeyed God. And the Lord did not forget what he threatened to do to them for their disobedience; they were taken into captivity. But through other prophets God promised to remember his people, to visit them and bring them back from captivity. Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian rulers who followed him thought best to bring the people of conquered territory close to the nation's capital and keep them under subjection. It was this policy that caused not only Jews, but the people of other nations to be settled around Babylon. But God raised up another dynasty whose idea was the opposite. Cyrus felt that conquered peoples would be more loyal and submissive if they were allowed to live in their own land under a governor. And it was this policy that caused not only the Jews but people of other nations to be returned to their native lands.

Young People and Adult Departments

The goodness and severity of God are manifest in his dealings with Israel. When he sent them into captivity for their sins he was exercising his severity. But when he brought them back he was exercising his goodness. (Rom. 11: 22.) But his severity was not merely for the satisfaction of his desires, but for the ultimate good of his people and for the honor of his name. And he is as capable today of exercising severity as he is his goodness. We must not lose sight of his severity; to do so might cause us to become careless and be lost.

Topics for Discussion

1. Fourteen hundred years before this Abraham traveled this same road from Chaldea. Can you trace the fortunes of this people from Abraham to the return from captivity? Can you name the great characters produced by this people? Can you name their greatest contributions to civilization during that time? Can you point out their greatest mistakes?

2. Only the hardiest and bravest would undertake such a journey as the returning captives made. There were rivers to be crossed without bridges; deserts where they would not see shade of tree nor water for days; countries inhabited by savage tribes of people who were their traditional enemies; rugged mountains to be crossed; hunger, pain, thirst, desert heat, long weary months of travel on foot, and the desolate city and devastated homes at the end of the journey. Such stout hearts were surely capable of great loyalty to God.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
What was the purpose of the author of Ezra?
What is the significance of the book of Ezra?

What change was brought about in the worship of the Israelites by the captivity?
In what way were the Israelites sifted by the captivity?
What is the time, place, and persons of this lesson?
Who were included in the promise of a return to the land?
Was this promise intended to have both a literal and spiritual fulfillment?
What does the New Testament teach about the return of the Jews, the ceremonies of the law of Moses, and the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile?
What do you know of Cyrus? How did Jehovah stir up his spirit?
How did God charge him to build a house in Jerusalem?
How did God stir up the spirit of the people to return?
What evidence do you have that the Jews did not return empty-handed?
What do you know of the history of the vessels Solomon made to be used in the temple?
How many vessels were returned with the people?

Lesson II—October 10, 1948

ZERUBBABEL LEADS THE FIRST COMPANY

The Lesson Text

Ezra 3: 1-8

1 And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jē-ru'sā-lĕm.

2 Then stood up Jĕsh'ū-ā the son of Jŏz'ă-dăk, and his brethren the priests, and Zē-rŭb'bă-bĕl the son of Shē-ăl'tĭ-ĕl, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Ĭs'rā-ĕl, to offer burnt-offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Mō'sĕs the man of God.

3 And they set the altar upon its base; for fear was upon them because of the peoples of the countries: and they offered burnt-offerings thereon unto Jē-hō'văh, even burnt-offerings morning and evening.

4 And they kept the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and *offered* the daily burnt-offerings by number, according to the ordinance, as the duty of every day required;

5 And afterward the continual burnt-offering, and *the offerings* of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of Jē-hō'văh that were consecrated, and of every one that willingly offered a freewill-offering unto Jē-hō'văh.

6 From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt-offerings unto Jē-hō'văh: but the foundation of the temple of Jē-hō'văh was not yet laid.

7 They gave money also unto the masons, and to the carpenters; and food, and drink, and oil, unto them of Sī'dŏn, and to them of Tȳre, to bring cedar-trees from Lĕb'ă-nŏn to the sea, unto Jŏp'pā, according to the grant that they had of Çȳ'rŭs king of Pĕr'sī-ā.

8 Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jē-ru'sā-lĕm, in the second month, began Zē-rŭb'bă-bĕl the son of Shē-ăl'tĭ-ĕl, and Jĕsh'ū-ā the son of Jŏz'ă-dăk, and the rest of their brethren the priests and the Lē'vītes, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jē-ru'sā-lĕm, and appointed the Lē'vītes, from twenty years old and upward, to have the oversight of the work of the house of Jē-hō'văh.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"*They gave after their ability into the treasury of the work.*" (Ezra 2: 69a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ezra 2: 64-69.

Daily Bible Readings

October 4. M.....The People Who Returned (Ezra 2: 1-58)
October 5. T.....Number of the Whole Assembly (Ezra 2: 59-70)
October 6. W.....Foundation of the Temple Laid (Ezra 3: 9-13)
October 7. T.....Haggai Encourages the People (Haggai 1: 1-15)
October 8. F.....Zechariah's Warning to the People (Zech. 1: 1-17)
October 9. S.....Zechariah Foretells Prosperity (Zech. 8: 1-17)
October 10. S.....Feast of Tabernacles Under Nehemiah (Neh. 8: 13-18)

Lesson Subject Explained

"If we may trust later traditions, the setting out of the 'captivity' for Palestine was joyous in the extreme. An escort of one thousand cavalry accompanied them, for protection against the desert Arabs, then, as now, given to plunder, and they started to the music of tabrets and flutes. The few rich among them indulged in the luxury of horses, of which there were seven hundred and thirty-six, or of mules, of which there were two hundred and forty-five. The aged, the children, and the delicate women rode on camels, which stalked along, four hundred and twenty in number, while six thousand two hundred and seventy asses were partly used for riding, but mainly carried baggage. But that there should have been only seven thousand six hundred and seventy-one beasts of carriage for fifty thousand people, shows that all but a few marched on foot, and that there was little to carry, unless some details have been left unrecorded.

"The dreary journey across the desert takes over four months, at the rate of such caravans. From the Euphrates to the north of Syria the route lay over a hard gravel plain, with no mountains, or clumps of palms, or bubbling springs, to break the wearying monotony. It ran at first on the west side of the Euphrates, northward from Babylon; then struck across the desert towards Lebanon, which may have been skirted on the southeast, if they made for Damascus, or approached from the north, by Hamoth and Riblah, which was apparently the usual road in those days. By a singular coincidence, the new Exodus took place in the same month as that in which Israel had fled from Egypt, eight hundred or nine hundred years before." (Geikie.)

Had these returning captives not been fired by a religious zeal surely they would not have had the courage to attempt such an undertaking as the resettlement of the land and the rebuilding of the city. The Edomites had taken much on the south and east, and the mixed people on the north (which later were known as Samaritans) were unfriendly. The towns of Hebron and Beersheba, of sacred memory for more than a thousand years, were then in the hands of their enemies, and were not recovered for nearly a hundred years.

Context of the Lesson

In the context of the lesson we learn the number of people who set out for the land of Palestine, and something of their ways and means of travel. Much is left unsaid concerning the hardships of the journey, the suffering, the sickness, and deaths which occurred along the route to sadden the hearts of those who pushed on with religious fervor.

We also learn of the liberality of the people when they reached the site of the once magnificent city. And we are reminded of the liberality of the people on another occasion in the long ago when Moses

called for contributions with which to build the tabernacle. (Ex. 35.) They gave sixty-one thousand darics of gold. The daric was a Persian coin, said to have been of pure gold. "Their full weight is about 128 grains troy, or a little less than that of the Attic stater. . . . They must have been the common gold pieces of the Persian empire." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary.*) Webster's Dictionary says the daric was worth $5.50 in our money. If that is true these people gave $335,500 in gold. Then they gave five thousand pounds of silver. The word translated pound was their maneh, which Adam Clarke says was worth about nine English pounds. Five thousand manehs would be forty-five thousand pounds in English money, or about $218,-250 in our money. This added to the figure above amounts to $553,750 in our money that was given by the people for the work to be done. A scant fifty thousand people, including servants and children, and yet their gifts amounted to more than ten dollars per head. Considering the value of money in that time, that was extra liberal giving. And in addition to the money given, one hundred garments for priests were contributed.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date for this lesson is 536 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Jeshua the high priest, Zerubbabel the governor, and the people.

Golden Text Explained

"They gave after their ability." We have already noticed the amount of their gifts, and have seen that this was an unusually liberal offering. As reasons for this we may see:

1. *The object of their offerings.* They were giving "for the house of God, to set it up." Many of them had no place to live; some were living in tents; others were living in houses out of which foreigners had been moved to make room for returning captives. But at the time of this offering it is likely that none of them had permanent places to live. But their first object was to build a house for the Lord. This was the spirit of Abraham of old. When he moved to a new place, the first thing he did was to erect an altar that he might worship God in that new place. David wished to build a better house for Jehovah than the one in which he lived. His was a house of cedar, and the Lord was still in the old tabernacle. That did not look right to David. (1 Chron. 17.) Yet there are many people today who are perfectly content to dwell in a fine house while the church building is a wreck.

2. *The spirit of their offering.* "They gave willingly." There was no well planned financial drive; there was no person-to-person solicitation, and no high-pressuring to get what they needed. How this differs from some religious organizations of this day—giving pie supppers, shows, and bazaars, or selling cakes and candy on the streets to get money for the Lord's work. No wheedling or flattery was necessary to get them to give; they were willing to give for the house of the Lord. And, notice next, they gave promptly for this work. They did not wait until they had spent all their money getting located in their own houses. They put the Lord first in this mat-

ter. It is possible that they would not qualify in the eyes of the world as good business managers, but they ranked high spiritually.

3. *The measure of their offering.* "They gave after their ability." Paul said, "For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according as a man hath, not according as he hath not." (2 Cor. 8: 12.) The rich gave much and the poor gave little, but the little of the poor required as great a sacrifice as the much given by the rich required of him. And sacrifice is not measured by how much we give; it is measured by how much we have left after we have made the offering. But in the average congregation it may be observed that the poor usually make greater sacrifices than the rich. The poor are more regular and dependable in their giving than are the rich.

And their giving was in a liberal measure. More than ten dollars per head including servants and children was an unusually liberal offering considering the value of money in that day. Paul taught liberality in these words, "But this I say, He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." (2 Cor. 9: 6.)

4. *The channel of their offering.* "They gave into the treasury." Here we see a fine spirit of cooperation. Each man did not act independently; but all put their money into the treasury so it could be used to the best advantage. Occasionally we find people who will not make contributions on the Lord's day, and allow their money to be used by the church for regular gospel purposes as determined by the elders of the church. They wish to give personally to certain preachers, orphan homes, missionaries, etc. No one doubts that the people to whom the offerings are made are worthy, but if every member of the church did the same thing, how would the local work be carried on? How could the elders plan a program of missionary efforts? or any other type of service? That way of giving would destroy the treasury; it would make cooperation impossible; and there would be hopeless overlapping in some places, and nothing at all given in other places.

Helps on the Lesson Text

And when the seventh month was come. This was the month Tisri, and corresponds to parts of September and October in our calendar. The proclamation for return was made in the first year of the reign of Cyrus, in the seventh month of that same year. Adam Clarke dates it the same, but other scholars of rank doubt that the people had time to make their arrangements to leave their homes, make a march which required four or five months, and be ready to start building in the seventh month. Nor is there any indication that Cyrus began his reign in the first month of the Jewish year. So the events recorded here as taking place in the seventh month may not mean seven months from the time Cyrus began to reign.

Then stood up Jeshua. Little is known of this high priest. "Everything we read of him indicates a man of earnest piety, patriotism, and courage. One of less faith and resolution would never have surmounted all the difficulties and opposition he had to contend with. His first care on arriving at Jerusalem was to rebuild the altar, and restore the daily sacrifice, which had been suspended for some fifty years." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary.*)

Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel. This man was "the prince of Judah." (Ezra. 1: 8.) His Babylonian name was Sheshbazzar (Ezra

5: 14), which indicates that he was in government service in Babylon. Being the prince of Judah we know that he was of royal seed, the one who would have been king if the Jews had been independent. So when the proclamation for return was made by Cyrus, he took the lead in getting things ready, and in leading the people back to his country. And Cyrus respected his position as prince among his people, and made him the governor of Judea.

And builded the altar of the God of Israel. This was their first act, which shows their genuine piety. Had the Jews been so pious all along, they never would have gone into captivity. But they, like many of us, could not learn but from experience.

As it is written in the law of Moses. We have noticed that one of the benefits to come from the captivity was a deeper regard for the written law. This will be seen again when the book was read before the people, and they bowed themselves to the ground. (Neh. 8: 6.)

They set the altar upon its base. This is usually thought to mean the old foundation which had never been destroyed.

For fear was upon them because of the peoples. Adam Clarke says "though fear was upon them." And it seems the word though gives a better sense than for. The Edomites were only a few miles away on the south and east.

Burnt-offerings morning and evening. The law said, "This is the offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto Jehovah: he-lambs a year old without blemish, two day by day, for a continual burnt-offering. The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even; and the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a meal-offering, mingled with the fourth part of a hin of beaten oil. It is a continual burnt-offering, which was ordained in mount Sinai for a sweet savor, an offering made by fire unto Jehovah." (Num. 28: 3-6.)

And they kept the feast of tabernacles. In Neh. 8: 17 we read that they kept the feast of tabernacles at that time for the first time since the days of Jeshua, the son of Nun. And Nehemiah's work was ninety years later than this. Smith's *Bible Dictionary* suggests this is another corruption of the text, but Adam Clarke thinks Nehemiah meant to say that the feast had not been celebrated on so large a scale since the time of Joshua.

Daily burnt-offerings by number. These are the offerings in connection with the feast of tabernacles. "The offerings required at this feast were the largest of all. They amounted to fourteen rams, ninety-eight lambs, and no less than seventy bullocks, being twice as many lambs and four times as many bullocks as were enjoined for the passover. The feast of tabernacles was especially one of thankfulness to God for the gift of the fruit of the earth, and the quantity and nature of the offerings were determined accordingly." (Speaker's *Commentary.*) See Num. 29: 12-38 for the daily offerings at this feast.

And the offerings of the new moons. See Num. 28: 11-15 for the offerings on these days.

Foundation of the temple . . . not yet laid. The altar of burnt offerings was the first thing erected, so that they might carry on their worship, even while they were building the temple. Their work and their worship went right along together.

They gave money also unto the masons. They paid laborers of Tyre and Sidon to help them to get heavy timber to put in the temple. Solomon did the same thing. (1 Kings 5.) Timber of the sort needed for foundations did not grow near Jerusalem. And this was all done with the consent, and by grant of Cyrus for this material needed for building.

Levites,... to have oversight of the work. This was the work on the temple. The Levites whose business it was to care for the house, were appointed to oversee the work of building that house. Jeshua was of the tribe of Judah, but there was no tribal jealousy now. He was willing to give responsible positions to men of other tribes. Such a fine spirit of unselfishness could not but inspire confidence and loyalty in the people who were helping to carry on the work; and thus were the peace and harmony of the people assured.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

For those teachers who use sand tables and flannel boards this lesson presents a fine opportunity for illustrating the lessons. Represent the people in tents, not having taken time to build their homes; show wreckage of the old temple scattered about, the people not taking time to build a temple; and then as the central figure, and the one demanding first attention, show the altar of burnt offerings erected, with lambs standing by ready to be offered. With this picture before the children, teach them that worship is the most important thing in life; that we are not to allow anything to keep us from worshiping God at the time and in the manner in which the word of God directs.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Man's inability to direct his steps might well be the topic for these classes. A great prophet made the statement that it is not in man to direct his steps (Jer. 10: 23), but boys and girls of this age are slow to believe it. The Jews illustrate this text. They walked in their own ways until God brought them into captivity as punishment for their disobedience. When they had suffered sufficiently to humble them he brought them back. Now they are careful to do "as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God." They read the book to find how they should conduct their worship, how the offerings were to be made, at what time they were to be made, etc. When we follow the book, and walk in the ways of God, we will be happiest and the Lord will be pleased; but when we become proud and independent and walk in our own ways, doing that which seems right in our own eyes, the Lord will be displeased and we will come to grief. We should learn this lesson from the Jews instead of learning it by bitter experience.

Young People and Adult Departments

Success through liberal cooperative giving could well be the topic in these classes. The people were few, the task was great, the need was pressing, and the people responded according to their ability, and the job was done. But where a few have to carry the whole load while many shirk their responsibilities, discouragement and indifference usually set in, and failure is the result. Regular, liberal,

sacrificial, cooperative giving is an absolute necessity on the part of all, especially in small churches.

Topics for Discussion

1. These Jews were careful to do all according to what was written in the law, and according to the ordinance. (Verses 2, 4.) Paul teaches us not to go beyond what is written. (1 Cor. 4: 6.) John tells us not to go beyond the teaching of Christ. (2 John 9.) These people did not do something because they had searched their law and could not find where it was forbidden; they searched the law and did what they found written there.

2. It is also said that they did daily "as the duty of every day required." (Verse 4.) Doing today's duty today is a good habit, and is in harmony with the general teaching of Christ. "Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." (Matt. 6: 34.)

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
What means of conveyance did the people have on their journey from captivity?
About how long did it take them to make the return trip?
In what condition did they find their city, and the country?
How much money was given for the rebuilding of the temple?
What was the object of their offerings, and the spirit of their offerings?
Discuss the measure of their offerings, and the channel of their offerings.
Discuss the need of such cooperative giving in the churches today.
What was the seventh month, and with what does it correspond in our calendar?
What do you know of Jeshua, and Zerubbabel?
What was the first act of the people when they reached Jerusalem?
Discuss their regard for what was written in the law of Moses.
What do you know of their continual burnt offerings?
How many animals were offered during the feast of tabernacles?
Where did they get the heavy timber for the foundation of the temple?
Who were appointed to be overseers of the work of building?
Is there any reason why the Levites were especially qualified for this work?

Lesson III—October 17, 1948

THE TEMPLE REBUILT

The Lesson Text

Ezra 4: 1-6; 6: 15-18

1 Now when the adversaries of Jū'dăh and Bĕn'jă-mĭn heard that the children of the captivity were building a temple unto Jĕ-hō'văh, the God of Ĭs'rā-ĕl;

2 Then they drew near to Zĕ-rŭb'bă-bĕl, and to the heads of fathers' *houses*, and said unto them, Let us build with you; for we seek your God, as ye do;

and we sacrifice unto him since the days of Ē'sär-hăd'dŏn king of Ās-sŷr'ĭ-à, who brought us up hither.
3 But Zĕ-rŭb'bă-bĕl, and Jĕsh'ū-à, and the rest of the heads of fathers' *houses* of Īs'rā-ĕl, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us in building a house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto Jĕ-hō'văh, the God of Īs'rā-ĕl, as king Çŷ'rŭs the king of Pēr'si-à hath commanded us.
4 Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Jū'dăh, and troubled them in building,
5 And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Çŷ'rŭs king of Pēr'si-à, even until the reign of Dă-rī'ŭs king of Pēr'si-à.
6 And in the reign of Ā-hăs-u-ē'rŭs, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they an accusation against the inhabitants of Jū'dăh and Jĕ-ru'să-lĕm.

15 And this house was finished on the third day of the month Ā'dăr, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Dă-rī'ŭs the king.
16 And the children of Īs'rā-ĕl, the priests and the Lē'vītes, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy.
17 And they offered at the dedication of this house of God a hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for a sin-offering for all Īs'rā-ĕl, twelve he-goats, according to the number of the tribes of Īs'rā-ĕl.
18 And they set the priests in their divisions, and the Lē'vītes in their courses, for the service of God, which is at Jĕ-ru'sā-lĕm; as it is written in the book of Mō'sēs.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"We ourselves together will build unto Jehovah, the God of Israel."* (Ezra 4: 3b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ezra 6: 1-5.

Daily Bible Readings

October 11. M.....Active Opposition to the Work (Ezra 4: 7-16)
October 12. T.....Work Stopped by the King's Decree (Ezra 4: 17-24)
October 13. W.....Enemies Write Darius About the Work (Ezra 5: 1-17)
October 14. T.....Records of King Cyrus Found (Ezra 6: 1-5)
October 15. F.....Darius Confirms the Old Decree (Ezra 6: 6-12)
October 16. S.....Enemies Turned to be Helpers (Ezra 6: 13-15)
October 17. S.....Temple Finished in Time for Passover (Ezra 6: 18-22)

Lesson Subject Explained

The building of the temple, while not the first thing on their program, was the main object of the return of the people. And Zerubbabel rushed everything else to get to this work on which his heart was so devoutly set. With a grant from Cyrus for timber from Lebanon and with money to pay the laborers, he got the work started in the second month of the second year. It was a joyous occasion when the priests sounded their trumpets and the singers sang the very same Psalm which was sung when Solomon dedicated his temple nearly seven centuries before. "How strange must have been the emotions of Zerubbabel at this moment! As he stood upon Mount Zion, and beheld from its summit the desolation of Jerusalem, the site of the temple blank, David's place a heap of ashes, his fathers' sepulchres defiled and overlaid with rubbish, and the silence of desertion and emptiness hanging oppressively over the streets and waste places of what was once the joyous city; and then remembered how his great ancestor David had brought up the ark in triumph to the very spot where he was then standing, how Solomon had reigned there in all his magnificence and glory and how the petty kings and potentates of the neighboring nations had been his vassals and tributaries, how must his heart alternately have swelled with pride, and throbbed with anguish, and sunk in humiliation! In the midst of these mighty memories he was but the officer of a foreign heathen despot, the head of a feeble remnant of half-emancipated

slaves, the captain of a band hardly able to hold up their heads in the presence of their hostile and jealous neighbors; and yet there he was, the son of David, the heir of great and mysterious promises, returned by wonderful providence to the home of his ancestors. At his bidding the daily sacrifice had been restored after a cessation of half a century, and now the foundations of the temple were actually laid, amidst the songs of the Levites singing according to David's ordinance, and the shouts of the tribe of Judah. It was a heart-stirring situation; and, despite all the discouragements attending it, we cannot doubt that Zerubbabel's faith and hope were kindled by it into fresh life." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.)

Context of the Lesson

In the context of this lesson we have the arrival of the people out of captivity, and the worship of Jehovah instituted anew in Jerusalem. The altar was the first thing to be erected, and the continual burnt offerings started morning and evening. The offerings of the new moon, and all the set feasts, and the freewill-offerings were instituted according to the law of Moses. When the worship had been started, they turned their attention to the building of the temple. Cedars were brought from Lebanon, as in the days of David and Solomon. Jeshua the high priest, and the Levites had charge of the building of the house of Jehovah. On the completion of the laying of the foundation of the house there was a religious ceremony of singing and of giving praise to Jehovah for his loving-kindness to Israel. Some of the people shouted for joy, while others wept aloud, "so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people; for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off."

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date of this lesson is 535 to 529 B.C. for the first section of the Lesson Text, and 515 B.C. for the second section.

PLACE.—Jerusalem and vicinity.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the adversaries.

Golden Text Explained

We ourselves will build. When the people of Samaria proposed to help build the temple, Zerubbabel and his helpers plainly and firmly told them they had nothing to do in the matter, it was none of their responsibility. These Samaritans, though nominally worshiping God, were worshipers of other gods, and they had intermarried with the heathen until they were more nearly like the heathen than they were the Israelites, so they were excluded from the work.

This exclusiveness is a Christian principle—not that one Christian is to exclude another, or that one church of the Lord is to exclude another, but Christians are not to mix with the world in the work of the church; they are not to cooperate in spiritual activities with those who are not Christians. In the parable of the talents (Matt. 25) we learn that the master called unto him his own servants, and gave them his money to use in his absence. This master did not have a right to call the servants of another man and put them to work for him. The master in this parable represents Christ, and the

servants blood-bought servants of Christ. Jesus has no right to work the servants of the devil, and he will not use them in the work of saving souls. Gospel work is the work of Christians, the servants of Christ; the servants of the devil, people who have never obeyed the gospel, have no more right to have a part in gospel work than these Samaritans had a right to engage in the rebuilding of the temple. Paul said, "When ye were servants of sin, ye were free in regard of righteousness." (Rom. 6: 20.) It is not the business of servants of sin to visit the sick, feed the hungry, and clothe the naked; nor is it their duty to preach the gospel. Only those who have obeyed from the heart that form of teaching (Rom. 6: 17, 18) have the right and responsibility to do these things.

"We ourselves together will build." By adding the word together, we get a lesson on cooperation, which is always a timely lesson. For several reasons these people needed to work together. (1) The task was great. It was one which taxed their ability. As Nehemiah at a later date said, "The work is great and large." Only by the fullest cooperation could they hope to accomplish what they had set out to do. (2) They had vicious enemies who delighted in hindering them from work. Lack of cooperation on the part of a single Israelite would have been encouraging to the enemy. Failure to cooperate would have been equal to giving aid to, or even becoming one of, the enemy. The enemies of the church are looking for sympathizers in the church, and one who refuses to cooperate in the work of the church, and criticizes the leadership is really giving aid to the enemies. One may be able to do more harm by criticism and lack of cooperation than an enemy on the outside can possibly do.

We build unto Jehovah. The motives and purposes of their hearts gave them a courage and strength they could not have had for any other work. They were not building for themselves. National pride was gone. Ambition to become a great nation with a spread and a glory like that of the days of Solomon had no place in their hearts. They were building for Jehovah. If they were killed by the enemy while on duty, they would have the satisfaction of dying in the service of Jehovah. Paul was sustained in times of danger by a feeling like that which must have filled the hearts of these people. "I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." (Acts 20: 24.) When people love the Lord and his work so much that life and the joys of this present world lose all their value, those people will be courageous, devoted, and diligent in the Lord's work.

Helps on the Lesson Text

When the adversaries . . . heard. These adversaries were Samaritans. They were proud of the little Jewish blood they had in them, and the more thoughtful among them seemed to be weary of the mixture of heathenism and the religion of Moses, and feeling that the Jews of the captivity had preserved the ancient faith in its purity, they longed to join them.

We seek your God, as ye do. This they gave as a reason why they should be allowed to assist in rebuilding the temple. This sounds plausible, and has a familiar ring to it. When people wish to have a "union meeting," they invite all who are inclined to be religious and say, We are all seeking the same God, and all striving

to go to the same place. It is difficult for them to understand why people who are all seeking to go to heaven cannot work together, regardless of the way they are trying to get to heaven. They fail to see that people who are trying to go to heaven in their own way and after their own traditions have actually rejected God and are his enemies; and they fail to appreciate the fact that people who respect the authority of Christ and are walking in his ways cannot have fellowship with them. (Eph. 5: 11.)

We sacrifice unto him. This is another reason these Samaritans gave why they should be allowed to work on the temple. These people said they were brought into Samaria by Esar-haddon king of Assyria. This king began his reign in 680 B.C., and Samaria was captured in 721 B.C. by Sargon. So the principle of colonization was carried on for some time after the kingdom of Israel was carried into captivity. We learn that the people brought over to Samaria were overrun by wild beasts, and they thought it was because they knew not the religion of the country, so they asked for a priest to be returned to teach them how to worship God. So they had a mixture of religions, and it was said, "They feared Jehovah, and served their own gods." (2 Kings 17: 33.) On the basis of such worship they claimed a right to have a part in the rebuilding of the temple.

Ye have nothing to do with us. This was the answer of the leaders who were in charge of rebuilding the temple. They were brutally frank in their reply. They seemed not to have used much tact, or policy. Their "method of approach" was one that really approached; they got to the point without delay. Cyrus had commissioned them to build, and that commission had not included the Samaritans. They were within their rights, and there they would stand.

They weakened the hands of the builders. They kept up a barrage of discouragement in whatever way they could devise. For one thing they hired lawyers to frustrate the men who were in the lead. This was kept up all the days of Cyrus, who died in 529 B.C., and on until in the reign of Darius who came to the throne in 521 B.C. It is interesting to note that the rebuilding of the temple was a fine thing when they thought they could have a part in it, but when they were denied a part in the work they thought the rebuilding was an evil thing and discouraged the workers, and even wrote the king for permission to stop it.

In the reign of Ahasuerus. This is not the king mentioned in Esther by that name. "This must be Cambyses. For we read (verse 5) that their opposition continued from the time of Cyrus to that of Darius, and Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes, i.e., Cambyses and Pseudo-Smerdis, are mentioned as reigning between them." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary.)*

Wrote they an accusation against the Jews. Read verses 11 to 16 to see what they wrote.

And this house was finished. The date as given here is the sixth year of the reign of Darius. Since Darius came to the throne in 521 B.C., we conclude the temple was finished in 515 B.C. It was a political change which brought Cyrus to power that gave the Jews their opportunity to return to Palestine; and now another change in the politics of the country brought Darius to power and he proved

to be friendly to the Jews. Jeremiah and Ezekiel foretold the building of the temple as well as the return of the people when the ruling powers favored no such moves.

Kept the dedication of this house of God with joy. For twenty years they had been working and wrangling with their enemies, and a part of that time they were stopped from the work by order of the ruling king. And now since Darius had given them permission to resume the work, and the temple has been finished in spite of all the efforts of their adversaries, they have reason for rejoicing. But there were mixed emotions. The old men who had seen the first temple built by Solomon and could remember the splendor of it before it was finally destroyed under Nebuchadnezzar, these men were weeping instead of rejoicing. (Ezra 3: 12.) There was such a contrast between the houses that they could not keep from feeling that their glory had departed. Israel was not what she used to be, and there seemed little hope to them that she would ever be such a glorious and powerful nation as she was in her former days.

And they offered at the dedication. If Solomon's house was better and more splendid than the one the returned captives built, so was his dedication service more glorious than this one. He offered twenty thousand oxen and one hundred twenty thousand sheep. (1 Kings 8: 63.) But Zerubbabel could afford no more than one hundred bullocks, and two hundred rams, and four hundred lambs. However that does not mean that the service conducted by Solomon was more pleasing to God than that under Zerubbabel.

For all Israel, twelve he-goats. This is said to be according to the number of the tribes of Israel. Were all tribes represented there in that service? We have already suggested that some of the ten tribes may have returned in fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy. (Ezek. 37: 15-23.)

As it is written in the book of Moses. Moses gave the law regulating the work of the Levites and determined that they should be the tribe to take care of the tabernacle, and from which all priests were to be selected. But David divided them into courses. (1 Chron. 23: 6.) It is interesting to note how careful these returned Jews were to do all things according to the law of Moses. During their exile they had learned respect for that law.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

The joy of being in God's house would serve well as the topic for these classes. When Jesus was lost from his parents, they finally found him in the temple, God's house. When his mother expressed concern for him, he suggested to her that she should have expected to find him in his Father's house. These Jews had been a long time in captivity where they were denied the privilege of gathering in the house of God, and when they finally finished it their joy knew no bounds. These children should be taught to appreciate the great blessing they enjoy in being able to have a place to worship, and they should be helped to cultivate regular habits of attendance at worship.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Having no fellowship with evil is a good topic for these departments. These Jews had learned the hard way what tampering with

evil means. They were determined not to become involved in and entangled with evil again, so they refused to allow the Samaritans to have any fellowship with them in the building of the house. A little leaven will leaven the whole lump. (1 Cor. 5: 6.) Young people must learn that the only way to keep themselves pure is to refuse to temporize with sin in the least. To give sin a little place in our life is to open the door to many and vicious sins to follow. A desire entertained today will be a ruling passion tomorrow, and likely a soul-destroying habit within a short time. Our only hope lies in our being able to say firmly, "Ye have nothing to do with us."

Young People and Adult Departments

The lesson of non-fellowship with error and sin in church activities cannot be stressed too much in these departments. The leadership of churches is in the hands of men in these groups, and leaders need to realize that there can be no fraternizing with error. Union meetings where vital truths are suppressed and where error is taught cannot be tolerated. Christians should be taught that they cannot sing in the choir and in other ways encourage people to become members of denominations. Paul teaches that it is not enough merely to refrain from taking an active part in such evils, but we must openly reprove and rebuke them. (Eph. 5: 11; 2 Tim. 4: 2-4.)

Topics for Discussion

1. Can you think of anything Zerubbabel could have gained by accepting the help of the Samaritans in building the house of God? Would it not have been the popular thing to do? Would it not have saved a [illegible] of opposition and loss of time? Would it not have given him a chance to teach the Samaritans the true way? And now, can you justify Zerubbabel in rejecting their help?

2. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah were the associates of Zerubbabel in this work of building the temple. It will be worth while to read them in connection with this lesson and be able to discuss the value of their influence upon the builders of the temple. Do preachers of today exert a similar influence in the building of spiritual Zion?

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
What emotions do you think filled the heart of Zerubbabel as he surveyed Jerusalem in waste?
Where did the Jews get their heavy timber for the temple?
Who had charge of the work of building the house?
What of the joy of the people when the foundation was finished?
Discuss the time, place, and persons of this lesson.
In what way is Christianity exclusive, and to what extent should we be exclusive?
What was their need of cooperation, and what is its value to us?
Discuss the motives which made possible their work.
Who were their adversaries, and what do you think of their intentions?

What was the first argument of the adversaries for the privilege of helping?
What was their second argument, and what do you know of their sacrifices?
How did they weaken the hands of the builders, and for how long?
When was the temple finished, and how long were they in building it?
Contrast the dedication with that of Solomon's temple.
What were the emotions of the old men when they saw the temple?
What suggests the respect of the Jews for the law of Moses?

Lesson IV—October 24, 1948

THE NEW TEMPLE DEDICATED

The Lesson Text

Ezra 6: 16-22

16 And the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl, the priests and the Lē'vītes, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy.
17 And they offered at the dedication of this house of God a hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for a sin-offering for all Ĭs'rā-ĕl, twelve he-goats, according to the number of the tribes of Ĭs'rā-ĕl.
18 And they set the priests in their divisions, and the Lē'vītes in their courses, for the service of God, which is at Jē-ru'sā-lĕm; as it is written in the book of Mō'sĕs.
19 And the children of the captivity kept the passover upon the fourteenth *day* of the first month.
20 For the priests and the Lē'vītes had purified themselves together; all of them were pure: and they killed the passover for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves.
21 And the children of Ĭs'rā-ĕl that were come again out of the captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the nations of the land, to seek Jē-hō'văh, the God of Ĭs'rā-ĕl, did eat,
22 And kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for Jē-hō'-văh had made them joyful, and had turned the heart of the king of Ăs-sȳr'ĭ-ȧ unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Ĭs'rā-ĕl.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"They sang one to another in praising and giving thanks unto Jehovah."* (Ezra 3: 11a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ezra 10: 1-4.

Daily Bible Readings

October 18. M.....Ezra Comes to Jerusalem (Ezra 7: 1-10)
October 19. T.....The King's Letter to Ezra (Ezra 7: 11-26)
October 20. W.....Those Who Went with Ezra (Ezra 8: 1-14)
October 21. T.....Levites and Nethinim Invited (Ezra 8: 15-20)
October 22. F.....A Fast Proclaimed (Ezra 8: 21-23)
October 23. S.....Freewill Offerings for Jehovah (Ezra 8: 24-30)
October 24. S.....Their Arrival in Jerusalem (Ezra 8: 31-36)

Lesson Subject Explained

Something should be said of the size of this temple which was built by Zerubbabel. In the decree which Cyrus made, and as issued anew by Darius, we learn that it was to be sixty cubits high and sixty cubits wide; the length is not mentioned, but if it is the same as that of Solomon it would be sixty cubits. There is the possibility that it exceeded the old temple in length as much as in width. One author quoted by Josephus says this temple was five hundred feet long and one hundred cubits wide. We have proof that the width is

exaggerated, and so have a right to suppose the same about the length. But even so we would suppose the length to be near three hundred feet, or about two hundred cubits. In comparison to this the temple built by Solomon was sixty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and thirty cubits high. (1 Kings 6: 2.) In 2 Chron. 3: 4 the height is said to be greater than that mentioned in Kings, but the reader may study these differences for himself. And if the dimensions seem too much greater than those of Solomon, it is to be noted that Herod made it even larger when he rebuilt, or rather repaired, this one built by Zerubbabel. Herod built an enclosure around this temple which measured one hundred and eighty cubits wide by two hundred and forty cubits long.

"From these dimensions we gather, that if 'the priests and Levites and elders of families were disconsolate at seeing how much more sumptuous the old temple was than the one which on account of their poverty they had just been able to erect' (Ezra 3: 12), it certainly was not because it was smaller, as almost every dimension has been increased one third; but it may have been that the carving and the gold, and other ornaments of Solomon's temple far surpassed this, and the pillars of the portico and the veils may all have been far more splendid, so also probably were the vessels; and all this is what a Jew would mourn over far more than mere architectural splendor. In speaking of these temples we must always bear in mind that their dimensions were practically very far inferior to those of the heathen. Even that of Ezra was not larger than the average parish church of the last century; Solomon's was smaller. It was the lavish display of precious metals, the elaboration of carved ornament, and the beauty of the textile fabrics, which made up their splendor and rendered them so precious in the eyes of the people, and there can consequently be no greater mistake than to judge of them by the number of cubits they measured. They were the temples of a Shemitic, not of a Celtic, people." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary.)*

Context of the Lesson

The prophet Haggai furnishes us with some of the moral and spiritual conditions of the community which are of interest. (Hag. 1: 1-11.) Speaking of these conditions and of the prophet's efforts, Geikie says, "It was in the second year of Darius Hystaspis, on the first day of the sixth month, September or October, B.C. 521 that Haggai first presented himself before Zerubbabel and Jeshua, to stir both them and the people to renewed efforts towards the rebuilding of the temple. The exaggerated hopes of the first period of the return had died away. Instead of the glorious Messianic times they had expected, only trouble and disappointment had befallen them. It seemed as if they had been deceived by the prophets. Their zeal died away under such discouragement. After fifteen years, the altar on Mount Moriah, and the laying of the foundation stone, were the only results of their lofty anticipations that a temple grander than that of Solomon would speedily rise before them. But if they had been disappointed in this direction, their material circumstances had improved. Debarred from restoring their national sanctuary, but free in other respects, they had devoted themselves to worldly affairs. Fine houses, owned by the richer colonists, had risen among the ruins

of Jerusalem, and this prosperity had still further lowered the religious tone. Warnings of the displeasure of God at their apathy and spiritual decline were not, however, wanting; for drouths had visited the land, the heavens had been stayed from the dew, and the earth from her fruit. But they still urged that the time for the rebuilding of the house of God had not yet come; fresh permission, they maintained, being required from the great king. This hypocritical plea Haggai boldly met by a stern attack on their insincerity. Haggai took it for granted that no new permission to build the temple was needed, since the one given by Cyrus had never been withdrawn, though the work had been forbidden. Fortunately, the people and their leading men accepted this view, and resolved to act on the counsel of Haggai, to which they listened with reverent awe. In about three weeks the sound of labor once more rose from the top of Moriah.

"The zeal and industry of the authorities of Judah, having once been fairly roused by the fervent energy of the prophets, sustained itself nobly till the new temple was finished. Four years sufficed for this, so great was the enthusiasm, and so efficient the help from the Persian authorities, after Darius had favored the undertaking. At last, in March of the year B.C. 516, the sixth year of Darius, twenty years after the return, the sanctuary was ready for consecration, though details in its ornamentation seem to have been added so late as the reign of Artaxerxes, the next Persian king." (*Hours With The Bible,* Vol. VI.)

The Historical Background

TIME.—515 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the people.

Golden Text Explained

"They sang one to another." 1. They could praise God for what they had in spite of the fact they did not have much which constituted the glory of the first temple. "Of necessity it must want many things which constituted the glory of that edifice, and could never be replaced. The Shechinah, the bright cloud, the emblem of the deity himself, was forever removed. The ark was lost, and the copy of the law which had been preserved in it. The Urim and Thummim too, by which God had been wont to communicate to his people the knowledge of his will, was irrecoverably gone; and the fire which had descended from heaven was extinct, so that they must henceforth use in all their sacrifices nothing but common fire. And what but their sins had brought upon them all these calamities?" *(Preachers' Homiletic Commentary.)* They had also lost the pot of manna which was kept in the ark, as well as Aaron's rod that budded, which were priceless relics of former days when God was with them. But we never lose enough but that we have much for which to be thankful. So they sang and praised God for his goodness to them. This suggests to us that we might well count our blessings instead of our misfortunes, and give thanks for what we have instead of complaining about what we have lost.

2. The cause of their praise was not something material, but spiritual. The laying of the foundation of the temple was the occasion of this praise to God, but it was not the primary cause of it. The balance of the verse says they gave thanks to Jehovah, "For he is good, for his lovingkindness endureth for ever toward Israel." Jehovah is good to his people, and for that we should always be thankful; nor should we be forgetful to say so to him in songs of praise. "Oh give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good; for his lovingkindness endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of Jehovah say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the adversary." (Ps. 107: 1, 2.) Only those who are lacking in appreciation can fail to see why we should wish to gather to sing praises unto Jehovah. His goodness is great, even beyond our poor power to measure or express; it is the true basis for all our joy and happiness; it is the fountain from which all our blessings flow.

3. Singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs that are fit vessels for the praise of Jehovah is an item of Christian worship, and one of the most pleasant and profitable exercises in which it is the privilege of God's people to engage. People who have the opportunity and ability to engage in such activity on Sunday and Wednesday nights, but go instead to a lodge meeting or a place of amusement are truly lacking in spiritual discernment and appreciation. There is certainly adequate cause to fear that they are not properly prepared in heart for the exercises that shall consume the time and interest of the redeemed of every nation, clime, and tongue when, in the New Jerusalem, they gather around the throne of God. They would likely be bored to tears and wonder "when will church ever be dismissed" so I can go to some place of amusement where I can find some real enjoyment!

Helps on the Lesson Text

The children of Israel, . . . and the rest of the children of the captivity. Mention is here made of the children of Israel and the Levites, which is the usual way Ezra refers to the captives who came up from Babylon. Then he mentions the "rest of the children of the captivity." Is this intended to refer to those individuals among the ten tribes who learned of the decree of Cyrus to permit a return, and who came along with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin and the Levites?

According to the number of the tribes of Israel. The offerings were made as if all twelve, or thirteen, tribes were represented on that occasion. It is possible for all the tribes to have been represented in that gathering without any of the first captivity having returned, but these things considered in connection with Ezekiel's prophecy in Chapter 37 suggest the probability that some of those first exiles returned to their land.

The children of the captivity kept the passover. This was a great feast of the children of Israel, instituted on the night they left Egypt under the leadership of Moses. (Ex. 12.) Nine plagues had been visited on the Egyptians as punishment for their oppression of the Jews and to bring Pharaoh around to give his permission for the people to leave. The tenth plague was to be the final and most destructive. The first born of the nation was to be slain. The Jews were told to kill a lamb and to put the blood on their

doorposts and above the door, and then to roast and eat that lamb before starting on their journey. Nothing was to be left. If one family could not consume a lamb they were to share it with another family. Ever after that they were to eat a lamb in remembrance of the passing over of the death angel and the sparing of the first born of Israel on account of the blood. The feast began on the fourteenth day and continued through the twenty-first day of the first month of their ecclesiastical year.

The priests and the Levites had purified themselves together. It was the duty of the priests and Levites to skin the lambs, sprinkle the blood, and in general superintend the celebration of the feast. To do this in an acceptable manner they had to be ceremonially clean. (2 Chron. 29: 34.) And on one occasion the priests and Levites had not sanctified themselves in sufficient number to have the passover in the first month, so they took it on the fourteenth day of the second month as provided in the law of Moses. (2 Chron. 30: 3, 15.) But on this occasion the zeal of the people and their interest in spiritual matters was so great that all the priests and Levites had taken the proper care to be in readiness for the celebration of the feast.

Separated themselves . . . from the filthiness of the nations. Adam Clarke says these are proselytes who were converted by the Jews during the exile. But this expression is used in other places in such way as to show that it means Jews who had become infected with the customs and doctrines of the heathen around them since their return. They had been in Palestine now twenty years and some of them had intermarried (Ezra 10: 2), and even some of the priests had done according to the abominations of the heathen in the land. (Ezra 9: 1-4.) So Ezra means to say that the passover was celebrated by all those who had separated themselves from the filthiness of the heathen about them; but those who had intermarried, and those who had gone after the abominations of the heathen in matters of worship, were not allowed to eat the passover.

God turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them. The Jews were mindful of the fact that they were not responsible for the favorable attitude of the king toward them; they gave praise to God for the favors of the king of Assyria. We are told to pray for our rulers, that God will bless them and direct them in the ways of wisdom, that we may lead peaceable lives in godliness and gravity. (1 Tim. 2: 1-3.) So God is still ruling in the affairs of nations, inclining rulers to favor his people. If not, why are we told thus to pray in their behalf?

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

God can be praised by children. Since the principal theme of our lesson is the praise which the people offered at the service of dedication, it may be well to impress these children with the fact that the praise service is one in which they can have a real part, and that with their praise the Lord is highly pleased. Once when the children were praising Jesus, the Jews asked him to stop them. He asked them if they ever read the scripture which says, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" (Matt. 21: 16.) For this reason children should be taught to sing spiritual songs. They should be led into the appreciation of the best songs, and not the cheap

jazz songs which have appeal to the feet more than they do the heart.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The thoughts above are applicable here. These boys and girls should spend a lot of time singing in their training classes. The boys should be encouraged to lead singing. The elders should have singing schools conducted for the benefit of the church, and especially for the young people of this age. A good way for them to spend some of their time on Sunday afternoon is to go with the preacher or one of the elders to sing in homes of shut-ins. In this way they can bring sunshine and gladness into the hearts of these people, give praise to the Lord, and occupy their time and talents to the very best advantage. Teachers will do well to take the lead in these activites, or encourage others of ability to do so.

Young People and Adult Departments

Separate from the filthiness of the nations may well be made the central point of this lesson in these departments. Such separateness on the part of the Jews was essential to participation in the passover feast. This separateness is necessary to our participation in our passover, Christ. (1 Cor. 5: 7.) This filthiness may be either moral or spiritual, in life or doctrine and practice in our worship. To the extent that we look to the people about us as our standard to do things which they do for the sake of popularity or to avoid criticism and persecution, to that extent we need to separate ourselves from the filthiness of the nations. Purity of morals, doctrine, and practice is very important, and cannot be overemphasized.

Topics for Discussion

1. It is the end and essence of all religion to turn the mind from self to God: to give it absorbing views of the divine beauty and glory; to fill it with the divine love and zeal; to make it feel honored in honoring God, blessed in blessing him, to make it feel that nothing is too good or too great for him. Singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs is one way of turning the mind from self to God, of learning and meditating upon the beauty and glory of the divine person of God, and of honoring God for what he is and has done for us.

2. Keep thyself pure. (1 Tim. 5: 22.) Be an example to the believer in purity. (1 Tim. 4: 12.) Cleanse yourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit. (2 Cor. 7: 1.) The law of Christ demands separateness from defilement that we may serve the Lord. (2 Tim. 2: 20-22.)

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
What was the size of the temple of Zerubbabel?
How did it compare in size with Solomon's temple, and in splendor?
How would those temples compare in size with church buildings today?
To what did the people turn their thoughts and efforts when they ceased work on the temple?

Who roused them out of their indifference and put them to work again?
How long were they in building the temple?
What was in Solomon's temple that was not in the temple of Zerubbabel?
Can one praise God for his blessings while complaining about what he does not have?
What was the primary cause for their praise at this time?
What obligation do we have on account of the loving-kindness of God?
What is one of the most pleasant and profitable exercises in which God's people can engage?
What in our lesson suggests the return of some of the exiles of the kingdom of Israel?
Discuss the institution and celebration of the passover.
What part did priests have in the passover, and were they ever unprepared for their work?
How were some made unfit to eat the passover, and what was required of them?
Why did the kings of Assyria favor the return of the captives?
What suggests that God still rules in the affairs of nations?

Lesson V—October 31, 1948

EZRA LEADS OUT A COMPANY OF PRIESTS

The Lesson Text

Ezra 7: 1-10

1 Now after these things, in the reign of Ăr-tăx-ērx'ēs king of Pēr'si-ȧ, Ĕz'rȧ the son of Sē-rā'ĭăh, the son of Ăz-ă-rī'ăh, the son of Hĭl-kī'ăh,
2 The son of Shăl'lŭm, the son of Zā'dŏk, the son of Ă-hī'tŭb,
3 The son of Ăm-ă-rī'ăh, the son of Ăz-ă-rī'ăh, the son of Mē-rā'ĭŏth,
4 The son of Zĕr-ă-hī'ăh, the son of Ŭz'zī, the son of Bŭk'kī,
5 The son of Ăb-ī-shū'ȧ, the son of Phĭn'ĕ-hăs, the son of Ĕ-lē-ā'zär, the son of Aâr'ŏn the chief priest—
6 This Ĕz'rȧ went up from Băb'ȳ-lŏn. And he was a ready scribe in the law of Mō'sĕs, which Jē-hō'văh, the God of Ĭs'rȧ-ĕl, had given; and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of Jē-hō'văh his God upon him.
7 And there went up some of the children of Ĭs'rȧ-ĕl, and of the priests, and the Lē'vītes, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nĕth'ĭ-nĭm unto Jē-ru'sȧ-lĕm, in the seventh year of Ăr-tăx-ērx'ēs the king.
8 And he came to Jē-ru'sȧ-lĕm in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king.
9 For upon the first *day* of the first month began he to go up from Băb'ȳ-lŏn; and on the first *day* of the fifth month came he to Jē-ru'sȧ-lĕm, according to the good hand of his God upon him.
10 For Ĕz'rȧ had set his heart to seek the law of Jē-hō'văh, and to do it, and to teach in Ĭs'rȧ-ĕl statutes and ordinances.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"I desire goodness, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings."* (Hosea 6: 6.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ezra 7: 11-17.

Daily Bible Readings

October 25. M.....Mixed Marriages Trouble Ezra (Ezra 9: 1-4)
October 26. T.....Ezra Prayed Concerning the Matter (Ezra 9: 5-15)
October 27. W.....The People Confess Their Sin (Ezra 10: 1-8)
October 28. T.....Jews Separate from Heathen Wives (Ezra 10: 9-17)
October 29. F.....Names of the People Involved (Ezra 10: 18-44)

October 30. S. ..... Paul's Teaching on Marriage (1 Cor. 7: 8-24)
October 31. S. ..... Paul's Teaching (Continued) (1 Cor. 7: 25-40)

Lesson Subject Explained

From the heading of our lesson one might get the idea that the whole company Ezra led from Babylon were priests, but this is not true. In Ezra 8: 15 we read, "I viewed the people, and the priests, and found there none of the sons of Levi." This is usually interpreted to mean there were no Levites who were not priests, since he said there were priests in the company, but no Levites. All priests were Levites in the sense that they were of the tribe of Levi; but not all Levites were priests. And since the work of the priests differed from that of the sons of Levi who were not priests, they came to be called by the two names, and the names were used to specify two classes of workers around the temple.

From the eighth chapter of Ezra we learn that in all there were one thousand seven hundred and fifty-four males who returned with Ezra. This does not include the women and children under twenty years of age. It would be fair to assume that most of these men were married, and that they had an average number of children. If each man had a wife and two children, there was a company of over seven thousand people who returned with Ezra, though this is a little larger figure than is usually supposed to have been in the company. However the provisions made for the journey and the time consumed on the journey indicate that there was a large company.

Context of the Lesson

In the context of this lesson there are a number of interesting things. First, the king, Artaxerxes, gave Ezra a letter of authority to make this journey and to make whatever corrections in Judea he thought best. This Artaxerxes is a different man from that mentioned in the fourth chapter. This one was called Artaxerxes Longimanus. His reign began in 464 B.C. at the death of his father Xerxes the Ahasuerus of Esther. And the incidents recorded in the book of Esther happened during the time intervening between our last lesson and this one. From the letter he wrote Ezra we learn that "the people of Israel, and their priests and the Levites, in my realm, that are minded of their own free will to go to Jerusalem" were invited to go along. There was no pressure brought on any one to go, nor was the number restricted to priests and Levites.

Next, they were given a great amount of money to take to Jerusalem to be used in restoring the city and beautifying the temple, as well as provisions to be used on the journey from Babylon to Jerusalem. Besides what was consumed on the way from Babylon to Jerusalem, Ezra weighed in seven hundred and fifty talents of silver, one hundred talents of gold, and twenty bowls of gold worth one thousand darics, or $5,500.00, and vessels of fine brass as precious as gold. A talent of silver is variously estimated from $1,500 to $2,000 in our money; and a talent of gold is estimated at about $25,000. We therefore conclude that Ezra reached Jerusalem with more than $3,700,000. Some argue that there was such a thing as a long talent and a short talent, and that Ezra may have used the short talent standard. If so the amount would be about half of this figure. But this was a liberal amount for the king, his counselors, and the friends

of Ezra to contribute. And he certainly must have been a man with a good reputation for them to have given all this money to him to use as he saw fit. (Ezra 7: 18.)

Another interesting thing about the decree of Artaxerxes is the provision for exempting the priests, Levites, singers, porters and Nethinim who were servants about the temple, from all "tribute, custom, or toll." (Ezra 7: 24.)

Another thing which shows the confidence the king had in Ezra, and something of the ability of the man to accept and discharge responsibility, the king made him the ruler of Judea above the governor which was there, and gave him the power to impose fines and execute sentences of banishment, confiscation, and even death. (Ezra 7: 26.) With this in mind we can understand why the people responded when Ezra called on them to separate themselves from their heathen wives or be denied the privilege of eating the passover.

Another thing of interest in the context is the fact that Ezra led these several thousand people, and carried all this money through territory infested by bands of men who derived their living from robbing travelers, and he did not ask the king for an armed escort. Ezra had told the king that he was a servant of Jehovah who was a great and powerful God, able to care for his people. No doubt he told of the deliverance of the people from Egypt, of driving out the nations of Canaan, and of the great nation built in the days of David and Solomon. He explained that the people were in captivity, not because Jehovah was weaker than the gods of the heathen nations, but because Jehovah was punishing his people for their sins. But now part of them had returned, and he wished to take others for the encouragement of his brethren, and to rebuild the city of Jehovah. And after telling him of the greatness of Jehovah, Ezra was ashamed to ask the king for an armed escort. The king would doubt the greatness of Jehovah, or he would see that Ezra had no faith in him to protect his people. "For I was ashamed to ask of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way, because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them that seek him, for good; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him." (Ezra 8: 22.) So Ezra decided to pray instead of asking for soldiers to guard them in the journey. Hence they called on the people to fast and pray fervently for Jehovah to protect them in the way. "And the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy and the lier-in-wait by the way." (Ezra 8: 31.) This suggests that there were enemies along the way, and men lying in wait to rob such companies of people, but they were restrained by the Lord at this time.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date of this lesson is 457 B.C. It had been seventy-nine years since the first captives had returned by the decree of Cyrus. This was about fifty-nine years after the completion of the temple, and during all those years we have no record of what the people were doing.

PLACES.—Babylon, Ahava (where Ezra had the people gather as a starting point,) and Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Ezra, Artaxerxes, and the returning exiles.

Golden Text Explained

"I desire goodness, and not sacrifice." 1. To understand our Golden Text it will be necessary to know something of the time it was written, and the condition of the people to whom it was written. This was written in 780 B.C., about sixty years before the kingdom of Israel, the northern kingdom, fell and was carried away into Assyria. This was when Jehovah was sending his prophets to them reprimanding them for their sins, and pleading with them to repent so he would not have to execute the terrible judgment of captivity upon them.

Notice the tenderness with which Jehovah pleads with them, "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee?" These are the words of a long-suffering parent who does not wish to punish the wayward child as it so richly deserves. Jehovah is pictured as looking for some untried remedy for the people, some means by which he can correct his people without destroying them. He continues, "For your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the dew that goeth early away." He recognized some goodness in them, but it was so little and so soon gone that they deserved no credit for it.

2. *Ceremony worthless without the heart.* These people were continuing their sacrifices, but they were not putting their hearts into them. About this same time the prophet Amos was writing, "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt-offerings and meal-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts." (Amos 5: 21, 22.) Why would God refuse these offerings? "They hate him that reproveth in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly. Forasmuch therefore as ye trample upon the poor, and take exactions from him of wheat: ... ye that afflict the just, that take a bribe, and that turn aside the needy in the gate from their right." (Amos 5: 10-12.) The hearts of the people were impure, full of hyprocrisy, therefore Jehohovah refused to accept their offerings. Sacrifices by the thousands without goodness in the heart would not gain the favor of God. Great gifts of money today without goodness in every-day life cannot buy one's way into heaven. God prefers that we have a knowledge of him rather than offer him great sacrifices. Going to church on Sunday and taking the Lord's Supper, but never giving time through the week to gain a knowledge of God through a study of his word is not the way to gain the favor of God. But this is a picture of many in the churches today. Devoid of a knowledge of God, but going to church Sunday morning, or running in Sunday night to take the Lord's Supper, because we have the habit or because we are afraid of the punishment that follows disobedience. Is not ignorance of the word of God as great a sin as neglecting to take the Lord's Supper? Will not God punish for the sin of ignorance as much as he will for failing to take the Lord's Supper? These Jews thought they would go to hell sure if they did not offer their sacrifices; but they seemed not to think they would be punished for not being good, or for not knowing God. And so church members today think they will surely go to torment for not taking the Lord's Supper; but they seem to think they can fail of goodness, and never have a knowledge of God, and go right on to heaven.

Helps on the Lesson Text

Artaxerxes king of Persia. "We may safely identify him with Artaxerxes Macrochier or Longimanus, the son of Xerxes, who reigned B.C. 464-425. . . . We conclude therefore that this is the king of Persia under whom both Ezra and Nehemiah carried on their work; that in B.C. 457 he sent Ezra to Jerusalem; that after thirteen years it became evident that a civil as well as an ecclesiastical head was required for the new settlement, and therefore that in 444 B.C. he allowed Nehemiah to go up in the latter captivity." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary.)*

Ezra the son of Seraiah, . . . the son of Aaron. The ancestors of Ezra are named back to Aaron to show that he was a priest, and that he was a descendant of Aaron. All we know about Ezra is revealed in these last four chapters of the book of Ezra, and in chapters 8 to 12 of Nehemiah.

He was a ready scribe in the law of Moses. It is generally thought that the scribes merely copied the scriptures. But their work was much more important than that, though that within itself was a very responsible work, as the purity of the scriptures depended on their veracity and ability. They came to be the teachers of the law. "They read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly; and they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading." (Neh. 8: 8.) The teaching work of Ezra was far more important than his work as a priest. And he is better known as a scribe than as a priest.

And the king granted him all his request. This suggests the influence he had in the court of Persia; it must have been equal to that of Daniel. When we consider the amount of money, and the extent of authority granted him, we must recognize in him a man of power.

He came to Jerusalem in the fifth month. From this we learn that four months were required for the journey across the desert from Babylonia to Jerusalem. Business parties and armies made it in less time; but this company consisting of men, women, and children would have to take more time.

Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of Jehovah. This is the reason he was a good man, worthy of the confidence of his king and friends. He purposed in his heart that he would learn the will of God. Too many today have no purpose of heart with reference to knowing what the Bible teaches. Young people purpose in their hearts to get an education, qualify themselves for certain positions, and to fill certain offices. And when they set their hearts on a thing, they usually accomplish their purpose. If they would set their hearts on knowing the scriptures, they could as surely do that.

To do it, and to teach. It is said of Jesus that he began both to do and to teach. (Acts 1: 1.) One without the other is not enough. Those who do, but never teach others to do, are very selfish, and really are not doing all they should, for they should teach. And those who teach, but do not live in harmony with their teaching, are hypocrites. And Paul told Timothy to take heed to himself and his teachnig, for in so doing he would save himself and those who heard him. (1 Tim. 4: 16.) So Ezra practiced this Christian principle long before the time of Christ. And this noble resolve is the foundation of his great character.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Volunteers for Jesus. How many of these children would be willing to volunteer to do something for Jesus, even if it made it necessary for them to leave their homes, and be exposed to dangers? That is what Ezra and several thousand other people did. The Lord needed help in Jerusalem. His people there were discouraged, and they were poor. They needed fresh blood among them, and they needed financial assistance. Ezra volunteered, and called on others to follow his example. That is what Jesus wants today, volunteers to help him take the gospel to people who have never heard it; volunteers to help the poor, the orphans, and people who are sick. Children can be inspired to have a burning desire to be helpers of Jesus. And, though they do not realize all it means and they have no way counting the cost, that desire will linger in their hearts, and may grow into a purpose as strong as that of Ezra or Daniel. Teachers are blessed with the privilege of helping children to form such purposes. There are no greater privileges. Do teachers appreciate them?

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Heroes are made, not born. Ezra set his heart to do certain things, and he did them. But he would never have done them, nor would he ever have been mentioned in the Bible if he had not set his heart to do these things. He had plenty of other things to do. He was a servant of the king; held some high office. And he could well have said he did not have time to turn lose and give his time to the struggling people of Jerusalem regardless of how much they deserved assistance. But he regarded the work of the Lord more important than his job, so he gave himself to it. Suppose he lost his job? Suppose he went broke financially, mortgaged his home and lost it? Did his religious zeal ruin him for life? If judging by the standards of the world, we would have to answer in the affirmative. But looking at things as God sees them, Ezra made a big investment and will reap one hundredfold rewards.

Young People and Adult Departments

The paragraph above is applicable in these classes. Hardheaded businessmen need to remember that they have spiritual obligations, and they need, for their own good, to take off time from business for religious activities. If the teacher can get a few men to set their hearts on doing something for the Lord each week, much good will be the result.

Topics for Discussion

1. Some contemporary events of interest: In 515 B.C. Darius bridged the Hellespont (the Dardanelles prominent in political affairs among nations today) and invaded Europe. The battle of Marathon was fought in 490 B.C., and the battles of Thermopylae and Salamis in 480 B.C. Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides were producing their plays in Athens, and Socrates was teaching philosophy. In China Confucius was founding a religious system which bears his name to this day; his work was from 551 B.C. to 478 B.C.

2. Ezra is one of the few men in whom both political and religious power was combined who did not abuse it. Saul and Solomon made

miserable failures. David made grave mistakes and suffered severe punishments on account of his abuse of such powers. Hezekiah and Josiah stand out among the kings. Moses, Joshua, and Daniel (whose power was limited) rank along with Ezra. We should be thankful that no man holds these powers over us.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
What classes of people were included in this second company of returning exiles?
About how many were in this company?
How much money was entrusted to Ezra?
What other help was given him?
What favors were shown priests, Levites, and singers?
Why did Ezra not ask for armed escort through the desert?
On what did they rely for protection from dangers?
Discuss the time, places, and persons of this lesson.
Discuss the time and circumstances of our Golden Text.
Why did God despise the sacrifices of the people?
Can you apply this principle today?
What do you know of Artaxerxes?
What do you know of Ezra?
What were the duties and responsibilities of a scribe?
What one thing explains the success of Ezra?
What principle of the gospel did Ezra hold to that made him a great man?
What did Jesus say of those who taught, but did not practice? (Matt. 23: 1-3.)

Lesson VI—November 7, 1948

NEHEMIAH VISITS JERUSALEM

The Lesson Text

Neh. 2: 11-20

11 So I came to Jē-ru'sā-lēm, and was there three days.
12 And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I any man what my God put into my heart to do for Jē-ru'sā-lēm; neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon.
13 And I went out by night by the valley gate, even toward the jackal's well, and to the dung gate, and viewed the walls of Jē-ru'sā-lēm, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire.
14 Then I went on to the fountain gate and to the king's pool: but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass.
15 Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall; and I turned back, and entered by the valley gate, and so returned.
16 And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work.
17 Then said I unto them, Ye see the evil case that we are in, how Jē-ru'sā-lēm lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jē-ru'sā-lēm, that we be no more a reproach.
18 And I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me, as also of the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for the good *work*.

19 But when Săn-băl'lăt the Hōr'ō-nīte, and To-bī'ăh the servant, the Ăm'-mŏn'īte, and Gē'shĕm the Ă-rā'bĭ-ăn, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king?
20 Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jē-ru'sā-lĕm.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Then answered I them, and said unto them, the God of heaven, he will prosper us."* (Neh. 2: 20a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Neh. 2: 1-8.

Daily Bible Readings

November 1. M.....Nehemiah Learns Jerusalem's Reproach (Neh. 1: 1-3)
November 2. T.....Nehemiah's Prayer for Jerusalem (Neh. 1: 4-11)
November 3. W.....Workers Organized for Speed (Neh. 3: 1-5)
November 4. T.....Prominent Men do the Work (Neh. 3: 6-14)
November 5. F.....Levites do Their Part of Work (Neh. 3: 15-27)
November 6. S.....Priests Work with Others (Neh. 3: 28-32)
November 7. S.....Opposition to the Work (Neh. 4: 1-14)

Lesson Subject Explained

We are told that Nehemiah was the son of Hacaliah. He lived in Shushan, one of the capitals of Persia. He was born in exile, as the time of our lesson is about one hundred and forty-one years after the fall and destruction of Jerusalem. Shushan was about two hundred and fifty miles farther east than Babylon, and it is probable that Ezra and Nehemiah had never met, and almost certain that they had not been associated together until Nehemiah went to Jerusalem. He had a responsible position in the government. We are told that a cupbearer was "an officer of high rank with Egyptian, Persian, Assyrian, as well as Jewish monarchs." Another author says, "The title cupbearer is misleading to us. It really implied that Nehemiah was a counselor, statesman, courtier, and favorite. It was not a political office, but one of great power and influence." It was a position that could be filled by those only whom the king trusted. It therefore suggests that Nehemiah had the respect and confidence of the king and all those who were associated with him in the government.

"Here, among the officials at the court of Artaxerxes, Nehemiah, a Jew, held the confidential post of cupbearer, which admitted him to constant intercourse with his master. To hold such a post, implied the enjoyment of the king's special confidence, as only an official who was unreservedly trusted could be allowed to discharge duties so readily offering opportunities to a traitor. That Zerxes should have had Esther, a Jewess, as one of his queens, and Mordecai as his grand vizier, accounts for the favor of his son towards Nehemiah. The tradition of the wisdom and fidelity of Daniel, moreover, might well excite a kindly feeling to at least some of the race." (Geikie.)

Nehemiah was almost certainly of the tribe of Judah, and may have been a descendant of David. He had opportunities for the best education the times afforded, and yet he was devoutly religious. Though he had been born in exile and had never seen Palestine, he had been taught to respect that land as a peculiar Jewish possession, and to yearn for its welfare. This was a part of his religion. "He was a man of profound piety, connecting everything, great or small, with the will of God. His prudence was equally marked; and there is no better example of constant dependence on God, united with

practical forethought. He was disinterested and unselfish; his wealth was used for public ends, and there is not the slightest reference to self apart from the common good." (Ellicott.)

Context of the Lesson

In the context of this lesson we learn how Nehemiah became interested in the condition of Jerusalem. Hanani, "one of my brethren," with certain other men of Judah had returned from Jerusalem, and had told him of conditions there. Later this Hanani is called the brother of Nehemiah. (Neh. 7: 2.) They told him that the people were in great affliction, that the wall about the city was broken down, and that the gates had been burned. Josephus says also that Nehemiah was told that people were robbed and kidnapped right out of Jerusalem and sold as slaves, that dead bodies were often found lying near the roads, and that the people were too poor and weak to rebuild the walls and protect themselves.

When Nehemiah heard these things he was sore troubled and mourned for four months. The king noticed the saddened countenance and asked for the reason. Nehemiah then told the king and queen of the desolation of Jerusalem, and asked permission to go there for the purpose of doing what he could to improve conditions. When the king asked Nehemiah what his purpose was, we read, "So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said unto the king. . . ." Surely Nehemiah did not run off to his private room and spend some time in prayer before he replied to the king. Nor did he kneel down in the presence of the king and spend some minutes in prayer before replying. But with a prayer in his heart, committing all to the goodness of God, and in that short moment asking God to direct him in his speech, and incline the heart of the king to his proposal, he told the king of conditions and asked to be relieved of his duties at the capital for a certain period of time that he might render a service to his people, his country, and his God. He not only asked for permission to go, but he asked letters from the king to the governors beyond the river, that is west of the Euphrates, that they would allow him to pass through their territory, and one to Asaph who was the keeper of the king's forest that he might give Nehemiah all the trees he would need to complete the work on the wall and the gates of the city.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date of this lesson is 445 B.C. This was about twelve years after Ezra led his company back to Jerusalem.

PLACES.—Shushan and Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Nehemiah, Artaxerxes, Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem.

Golden Text Explained

"The God of heaven, he will prosper us." 1. This implies an unlimited faith both in God and in the righteousness of the cause in which he was engaged. And certainly no one can read thoughtfully the record of these matters without being impressed with the unbounded faith of Nehemiah. Men of less faith and determination would have given up the effort as hopeless and would have returned to his good job and comparative ease he enjoyed in his high office

in the capital. But he believed that God fully intended to finish the job he had started. The fact that God begins is good evidence that he will finish a work, especially where he has willing helpers. So Nehemiah realized it was his job to make the people willing to do their part.

2. Faith expects Almighty protection. Nehemiah said, The God of heaven was on his side, and he would prosper the work. The governors of the provinces about him might oppose, and they might bring armed forces against him; and the king might be appealed to, and might be led to believe that Nehemiah purposed in his heart to rebel against the king. But if the God of heaven be with him and prosper him, the work could be done regardless of all opposition. Nehemiah was not depending upon the gods of the nations, but the God of heaven. If God made the heavens, he could build the walls of a city. The kings of the earth are in his hand to do with them as seemeth good to him; he raises them up and casts them down, he exalts one and deposes another. And if Nehemiah's work is of God, and if the people will but be faithful and devoted to God, the purposes of God will be accomplished if kings have to be deposed and nations destroyed.

3. True faith expects direction of God. God not only protects, but he directs. The way may be long and dark, but if the Lord walks by our side we need not fear the future. The lights of an automobile shine only a few yards ahead, but no one refuses to start a hundred miles at night just because his lights do not throw light on all the road every mile of the distance. As the car moves along the lights illuminate more distant portions of the road. So the way did not appear clear to Nehemiah at the beginning of his work, but of one thing he was sure—that the God of heaven would prosper the work. So we may not be able to see all the way which lies out before us—we are not able to see all the difficulties and obstacles—we are not able to see and recognize all the enemies who will oppose us and the work we are trying to do; but if our cause be just and our hearts right, God will prosper us. And with a faith like that there is no room for fear or hesitation. That is the faith that moves people to do great things.

4. Faith expects ultimate success. If one has the protection and direction of God, there is no reason for failure. So this faith expects success in its undertaking. If God be for us, who can be against us? Delays there may be, but failures never. Unforeseen difficulties may bring trials of our faith, and incomplete perceptions of the magnitude of our work may make it necessary for us to be patient through dark days of strife and threatening failure, but true faith which refuses to give up without the blessing will live to see that success which God intended.

Helps on the Lesson Text

And was there three days. Nehemiah had been in Jerusalem only three days when he began his work. This suggests that he was a man of action. And all that follows is in complete harmony with this idea. Had he not been able to move the people to swift decisive action he would never have completed the work of building the walls, for his enemies would have had time to stop him with an order from the king as they stopped Ezra in his work on the temple several years before.

And I went out by night. This suggests the wisdom exercised by Nehemiah. He did not make a public announcement of his plans which would excite the jealousy of the enemies of such work as he contemplated. He knew from the reception he had from Sanballat and Tobiah (verse 10) that he would have opposition. Undoubtedly he knew that these men had friends in Jerusalem who would keep them informed of his movements and any plans which he might make public. So to delay whatever opposition his enemies would bring against him, he went about his work secretly as long as he could.

Toward the jackal's well. In the King James version this is dragon well. "It is one of the uncertain points in the topography of the ancient city. Robinson assigns reasons for supposing it was a later name for the Gihon, which Hezekiah stopped up or concealed at the time of the Assyrian invasion (2 Chron. 32: 3, 4, 30), near the head of the valley on the west of Jerusalem . . . Sepp maintains that the dragon well of Nehemiah was the Bethesda of the New Testament (John 5: 2) . . . near one of the western avenues to the mosque of Omar." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary.)*

To the dung gate. One translation says the rubbish gate. Just outside this gate the refuse of the ctiy was dumped and burnt; it was directly before that part of the valley of Hinnom known as Topheth. (Jer. 19: 6-14.)

The gate of the fountain and the king's pool. This gate is said to be in front of the pool of Siloam. There are eighteen gates of the city named in the Bible, and two others named by Josephus, besides the gates of the temple. Twelve of these eighteen gates mentioned in the Bible are mentioned in the book of Nehemiah. The pool of Siloam was called the king's pool because its waters were used to water the king's garden.

Jerusalem lieth waste. This was Nehemiah's conclusion after he had taken a view of the city and its walls. It seems to have been the idea of the Persian kings that it was well to allow, and even help, the Jews to rebuild the temple and homes in the city, but not the walls. With a wall Jerusalem was so situated that a small force could hold out for a long time against a great army, and they seemed not anxious to see the walls rebuilt. So the walls still lay in ruins from the destruction by Nebuchadnezzar.

Let us rise up and build. Nehemiah told the Jews the hand of God was upon him, and that he had the permission of the king, so there was nothing to keep them from building the walls if they had a mind to work.

They laughed us to scorn, and despised us. These were the enemies of the Jews. Sanballat had some civil or military command in Samaria. Another enemy was Tobiah the servant, or slave, an Ammonite. Sanballat was a Moabite. And these two nations had what has been called a "hereditary hatred" for the Jews, so we might expect these men to oppose Nehemiah. The third enemy mentioned is Geshem the Arabian. He was one of the governors to whom the king gave letters; he was ruling over a tribe which held some territory and had to be recognized by the king or be a continual source of trouble to him. Their first impulse was to laugh at the work being done by the Jews, but seeing that something was being accomplished they did more than ridicule.

Will ye rebel against the king? This was their next move; they accused Nehemiah of intentions to fortify the city, take over the government, and rebel against the king who had been good enough to him to send him and help him in his work. Of course they had no basis for their accusation; it was simply a way to embarrass the Jews and hinder them. However they could make out a good case before the king if they wished to go into the history of the Jews and Jerusalem, for in the last years of the life of the kingdom of Judah it was known for its rebellion. It would be easy to make the king think they planned to do so again.

Ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem. In Deut. 23: 3, 4 we read that neither an Ammonite nor a Moabite could enter the congregation of Israel to the tenth generation; and Nehemiah interpreted that to mean forever. (Neh. 13: 1-3.) Geikie and others severely criticize Ezra and Nehemiah for being narrow and shortsighted in their rejection of the help offered by these men. But to men like Ezra and Nehemiah who knew the law, and had a healthy respect for the very letter of the law, these Samaritans mixed with Moabites and Ammonites, were doomed to exclusion from the congregation of Israel forever. And though David and Solomon (1 Kings 14: 21) disregarded this restriction, the Jews had learned to respect God's law, and they refused to admit them, and specified the reason. They are to be commended for their devout respect for the law.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Working with God might well be the lesson topic in these departments. Would these children enjoy working with the mayor of the city? The governor of the state, or the President of the United States? Yet we have the privilege of working with God, the maker of the world. Nehemiah said the hand of God was upon him, and by this he meant that God was with him and directing him in his work. So Nehemiah was working with God. And all those who helped him were working with God. The preacher and the elders of the church are workers with God for the salvation of souls. And when we attend church, or bring people with us to church, we are helping them, and so working with God. And children can do such things.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Working with God in spite of ridicule might well be the lesson topic for these departments. These boys and girls are in that stage of development where they are most influenced by the opinion of others. Ridicule and sarcasm are hard for them to take. They may miss church rather than leave a group who will laugh at them for going; they may go to questionable places and do things they know are not good rather than suffer ridicule of their gang. Nehemiah and his helpers preferred to have the approval of God rather than that of men, so they worked right on through the ridicule of their enemies.

Young People and Adult Departments

Faith that works by love accomplishes things is a good topic for these classes. Nehemiah had faith. Through his influence others came to believe the task could be done. But faith alone would never have done the job. Nehemiah went to work soon after he got to

Jerusalem; and then he began to organize the people, great and small, rich and poor, and set them to work. He was really an apostle of work, insisting that all work. Faith today without works of obedience to God's will is dead and will accomplish nothing. (James 2.)

Topics for Discussion

1. Ugly insinuation is one of the meanest and vilest methods of opposition known to man. Sanballat and his henchmen insinuated they thought the Jews intended to rebel against the king. The implication was that they would tell the king these Jews intended to rebel, and then the king would stop the work. This was a war of nerves, and intimidation.

2. His servants will build, but the enemies of God will have no portion. The servants of Christ today are expected to carry on the program of Jesus in saving the lost. His enemies, the children of the devil, may have no portion in the work. And his servants cannot compromise his truth or his cause by having fellowship with the enemies.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
What do you know of Nehemiah's parents, birthplace, and position before the king?
What other Jews had held similar positions of trust in exile?
What do you know of the character of Nehemiah?
How did Nehemiah learn of the condition of his people in Jerusalem?
How did he make known his desires to the king?
What response did Nehemiah get from the king?
Discuss the time, places, and persons of this lesson.
What degree of faith is suggested by our Golden Text?
What protection did Nehemiah's faith expect?
What assistance did his faith expect from God in his work?
What did Nehemiah's faith expect as the outcome of his work?
What about Nehemiah suggests that he was a man of action?
Trace Nehemiah's tour of inspection around the city at night.
How many gates to the city?
How many can you name?
What was Nehemiah's impression of the conditions, and of the need for action?
Who were his enemies, and what were their tactics?
Why could these men have no portion with the Jews?
Were Ezra and Nehemiah guided by the Lord in this decision?

Lesson VII—November 14, 1948

THE REFORM OF EZRA

The Lesson Text

Ezra 10: 1-4

1 Now while Ez'rà prayed and made confession, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there was gathered together unto him out

of Ĭs'rā-ĕl a very great assembly of men and women and children; for the people wept very sore.

2 And Shĕc-ă-nī'ăh the son of Jĕ-hī'ĕl, one of the sons of Ē'lăm, answered and said unto Ĕz'rà, We have trespassed against our God, and have married foreign women of the peoples of the land: yet now there is hope for Ĭs'rā-ĕl concerning this thing.

3 Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.

4 Arise; for the matter belongeth unto thee, and we are with thee: be of good courage, and do it.

Neh. 8: 1-3

1 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the broad place that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ĕz'rà the scribe to bring the book of the law of Mō'sĕs, which Jĕ-hō'văh had commanded to Ĭs'rā-ĕl.

2 And Ĕz'rà the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

3 And he read therein before the broad place that was before the water gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women, and of those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were *attentive* unto the book of the law.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law."* (Neh. 8: 9b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Neh. 8: 9-12.

Daily Bible Readings

November 8. M.....Ezra Arrives in Jerusalem (Ezra 8: 31-36)
November 9. T.....Ezra Confounded by Conditions (Ezra 9: 1-4)
November 10. W.....Ezra's Prayer Concerning Conditions (Ezra 9: 5-15)
November 11. T.....Usury Abolished by Nehemiah (Neh. 5: 1-13)
November 12. F.....Nehemiah's Contribution to the Work (Neh. 5: 14-19)
November 13. S.....Nehemiah Refuses to go to Ono (Neh. 6: 1-9)
November 14. S.....Wall Finished in Spite of Opposition (Neh. 6: 10-19)

Lesson Subject Explained

"At the head of the scribes among the Golah (Dispersion,) stood Ezra, a man of priestly rank, famous for his knowledge of the law, and zeal for its strict observance. His ancestry, which he could trace back to Aaron, included a long procession of priestly dignitaries. He was a descendant of the high priest, Hilkiah, who found the book of the law in the temple, in the days of Josiah, and of the high priest Seraiah, whom Nebuchadnezzar put to death at Riblah. Hence he stood out from his contemporaries as specially 'the priest!' But having been born in Babylonia he had never seen the temple. His priestly dignity was thus only titular, for he was far from the spot where alone he could officiate. So much the more earnestly had he betaken himself to the study of the law, and so much the more enthusiastic was he for its rigid observance. To secure all this, all other considerations had to bow. Intensely earnest, he had the absolute confidence of a zealot in his own definitions of its requirements. To enforce the Levitical holiness of Israel had become his one idea, and no Puritan was ever more energetic or stern in pressing his will on others as that of God. Already known as 'the priest,' he was even more widely known in his riper years as 'the scribe.' On new year's day of B.C. 459-8, the seventh year of Artaxerxes 'the long-armed,' son of the murdered Xerxes, Ezra had made up his mind to visit the Jewish colony in Palestine, and with his usual decision at once sought

and obtained permission from the king to do so. His object was to inquire respecting the observance of the law, as expounded by himself, in Judah and Jerusalem. His own profound acquaintance with it, and his absolute obedience to its minutest requirements were so universally acknowledged, that a school of disciples had gathered round him in Babylon, to spread his doctrine and recommend his example. In his opinion it rose in dignity above all the other sacred writings. Other prophets had received revelations in visions, but Moses had seen God face to face. The law had come direct from the lips of Jehovah.

"Ezra at once took his place as the supreme judge over the community, superseding the high priest himself and all other authorities; but five months and a half passed—from August to December—without any incident of moment. Meanwhile, the new ruler had been carefully noting things around him. With his staff of subordinate scribes, he marked the shortcomings of the community. A copy of the law, brought by him from Babylon, was the statute book, from which there was no appeal. His ideas, harsh and severe on many points, in the judgment of not a few, must, to some extent, have got abroad; among others, those on mixed marriages, which he fiercely condemned." (Geikie.)

Context of the Lesson

In the context of the first section of our Lesson Text we learn of Ezra coming to Jerusalem, bringing a company of people with him to reinforce the city and to help them financially. His coming was seventy-nine years later than the first return under Zerubbabel. Ezra was made the supreme ruler over the community, exercising even the power of life and death. So profound was his respect for the law as given by Moses that the conditions he found so shocked him that he rent his clothes, pulled out his hair and beard, and sat upon the ground the greater part of one day after hearing of the violations of the law. Much of this context is taken up with his confession of the sins of the people, a justification of God in bringing them into bondage in a foreign land for their sins, praise to God for his great mercy in leaving even a remnant of the people to return to the holy land.

In the context of the second section of our Lesson Text we learn of the coming of Nehemiah from Shushan with permission of the king to build the walls about Jerusalem that the people might be protected from the ravages of their enemies. In spite of great opposition the walls were built and ready for the gates to be hung on their hinges in fifty-two days. To do the work in this short time it was necessary for priests, Levites, merchants, rulers, and all alike to work. Certain sections were allotted to the various groups of workmen, and none refused to cooperate except the nobles of the Tekoites. (Ezra 3: 5.) The coming of Nehemiah was about twelve years later than that of Ezra, and ninety-one years later than that of Zerubbabel. So nearly a hundred years passed from the time the first exiles returned until the city of Jerusalem was a walled city and a safe place for people to live. In dangers, hardships, and persecutions the Jews were paying the price of disobedience to God.

So long had the people worked on the walls that they had consumed their meager savings; there was a dearth of grain and fruits,

as well as money. No one was paid for his work on the walls. So the poor mortgaged their property, and then their children to get something to eat. When Nehemiah learned of these things he was angry, and demanded that such sinful practices cease, and the money be lent without interest where needed. He set a fine example himself, asking no salary as governor, making large contributions of money to the work and to the needy, and feeding about two hundred people at his table daily. Nehemiah was a very wise man, seeing through the wicked schemes of his enemies to retard his work, and even to abduct and perhaps kill him. He stayed with the work, refusing to hold conferences with them, as well as allowing them neither part nor lot in the work.

The Historical Background

TIME.—457 B.C. for first section; 445 B.C. for second section.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the people.

Golden Text Explained

"The people wept, when they heard the law." 1. Copies of the law were scarce in those days, and people could not have one in their homes as we do. When Moses wrote the law he commanded that it should be read openly before all Israel once every seven years. (Deut. 31: 9-11.) Parents were to teach portions of the law to their children daily. (Deut. 6: 4-9.) But if there had been a reading of the law to all the people since their return from Babylon ninety years before this we have no record of it. And since copies of the law were not available for family use, it is possible that men lived to a good age and died without ever hearing the law read.

2. The reading of the law revealed several things to the people which might well account for their weeping when they heard it. (a) The person and character of God; his glory, majesty, holiness, goodness, and mercy. To hear these things expressed in the words of inspiration would thrill the souls of people hungering for such food for the soul. (b) They would learn of the goodness of God to their forefathers; of the sins of ingratitude on the part of their parents; and of the terrible consequences of those sins visited upon those who were guilty, and extending even down to those who were hearing the law for the first time. From this increased knowledge of God they would better understand why the city was allowed to be destroyed, why they were suffering as they were, and make them determined to live in such way that they would not bring any further misery on their posterity. (c) The reading of the law would reveal to them duties they had never learned and direct their feet in the ways of obedience that they might enjoy the loving favor of their heavenly Father.

3. Contrast their attitude toward the reading of the law with that of people today. There are many who do not take advantage of their opportunities to hear the law of the Lord read and explained. Can you feature one of those Jews going about his business as usual while the reading of the law was in progress? Yet people do that today.

People rarely ever appreciate their blessings until they are gone, or they are about to lose them. Freedom of speech means little to us until our rights are challenged, or in danger of being lost. The right to worship God is not appreciated as it would be if we had been deprived of it for many years. These Jews had been deprived of their temple worship and the reading of the law, and when they heard the law they were overcome by their emotions.

Helps on the Lesson Text

Now while Ezra prayed. Ezra was very emotional. He was deeply stirred, and readily manifested his emotions on this occasion by falling upon the ground and weeping bitterly. And as he wept the people gathered round him in ever increasing numbers. His prayer and confession of the sins of the people are recorded in the preceding chapter, and probably a small proportion of his words are recorded; and when the long prayer was ended he was surrounded by a great gathering of people, all joining with him in his weeping.

We have trespassed against our God. These are the words of one Shecaniah, mentioned nowhere else in the Bible, but who likely was among those who had taken foreign wives. By the teaching of Ezra, and the action of Ezra on this occasion when he learned of the people marrying foreign women, this man had been led to see his sin and was convinced that the best thing to do was to make things right.

Yet now there is hope for Israel. From the action of Ezra Shecaniah gathered that Ezra held no hope for the people. But seeing the people weeping with Ezra, Shecaniah felt they would be willing to do whatever was right in the matter. People whose hearts can be melted can usually be influenced to do right; but when the heart has turned to stone, the emotions cannot be stirred, and no expression of sorrow for sin can be brought to the surface, then it is about time to abandon hope.

Let us make a covenant with our God. This is still the language of Shecaniah. He proposes to make a covenant to put away the foreign wives and their children. They had violated the law, and evidence of their repentance, and their desire to obey God in all things, could be found in nothing short of putting away that which was unlawful. Hardships would be suffered by the women and children, but sin always results in suffering. What provision was made for these women, if any, is not revealed.

According to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment. Shecaniah was willing to be guided by Ezra who had made a study of the law, and by those who tremble at the commandments of the Lord. He had limited opportunities to know the will of God on such matters, but he had unbounded confidence in Ezra and his helpers. While we are to search the scriptures to see if we are being taught the truth, yet this is a mighty fine attitude for people to have toward their teachers. However he was careful to add that all things should be done according to the law. Here we see again their devout respect for the law as given by Moses. They were reaping the bitter fruits of disobedience to that law, hence they were the more careful to refrain from needless willful violations.

The matter belongeth unto thee, and we are with thee. The matter belonged to Ezra because his commission from the king authorized him to attend to such matters as needed to be corrected; because his acquaintance with the law enabled him to see what should be done; and his position as teacher of the law obligated him to take the lead in bringing the people into conformity to the demands of the law. And for the encouragement of Ezra, Shecaniah assured him that the people were with him, and would back him in whatever action he took.

Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses. Here the book is called the law of Moses; while in verses 8 and 18 it is called the law of God, and the book of the law of God. There are some who try to make the Ten Commandments the law of God, and the ceremonial statutes the law of Moses. They admit the law of Moses has been taken away, but they deny that the Ten Commandments have been taken away. But the terms the law, the law of Moses, and the law of God all refer to the same thing. (Luke 2: 22-27.) All three expressions are found in this reference referring to the same thing, one of the ceremonies of the law.

All that could hear with understanding. These words are used to describe those who gathered in the broad place before the water gate, in the eastern part of the city. Words addressed to the understanding of grown people cannot be appreciated by children; lessons which children can appreciate would be too elementary to profit grown people. Some think the lessons of the Bible are an exception to this rule, and that all grades and ages should be taught in one class. But even in Ezra's time they knew that some, the children, could not hear with understanding.

From early morning until midday. The margin says from the light. They met as soon as it was light enough to read and stayed until noon, about six hours. Not many people are willing to spend that much time reading and studying God's word on Sunday.

The people were attentive unto the book of the law. And as proof of this they found written in the law that they should live in booths one week in the year. This was to be in the seventh month which was the month they were doing this reading. So they obeyed that part of the law immediately. It is a fine thing to do to obey the commandments as fast and as soon as we learn them. To put off, or to refuse is a most dangerous practice.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

The Bible a priceless treasure would be a good topic for this lesson in these departments. The people about whom we study did not have copies of their Bible, the word of God, for every home as we have them today. So they had to depend on a teacher to keep a copy and read and instruct them in the will of the Lord. Hence they had few opportunities to hear the Scriptures read; and some of them lived out their lives without ever hearing it. It would be a good thing to ask the children to count as many blessings as they can which we could not have if we could not have a Bible in our homes; then the teacher may add to what the children have given, so they

will be impressed with the many blessings which come to us as a result of the Bible and our knowledge of it. This will tend to stir greater interest in Bible reading, and in regular attendance at Sunday school and church worship.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Unlawful marriages bring sorrow and suffering is a good topic for these classes. These boys and girls are not old enough to marry, but they are old enough to determine that they will give due regard to God and his will in the matter of courtship and marriage. This is the time to plant scriptural ideas in their hearts on the subject. If we wait until they are already in love, it will be too late to influence them. The only way to guide people in their marriage is to guide them and help them to fall in love with the right persons. They can easily form a union which will make it most difficult to live the Christian life, and may even make it impossible. Much scriptural teaching is needed along this line in these classes.

Young People and Adult Departments

Proper marriages for young people is a worth-while topic for the lesson in these departments. Some are in the age when they will be marrying, and others have children about ready for that experience. How to guide these children is one of the biggest responsibilities of a parent. Thoughtful sympathetic teaching and counsel at home is needed. Scolding and threatening will do no good when young people are already in love. Parents must do their work before their children get to that stage. Careful reading of the law would have saved these Jews of much sorrow and suffering, and it will save you and your children the same.

Topics for Discussion

1. Was Ezra narrow and hard in this matter of mixed marriages? Should he have allowed these to continue to live with their foreign wives to save suffering of women and children, but forbid any of the balance to marry foreign women? When people divorce for trivial reasons and remarry they are in adultery. (Matt. 19: 9.) Must they quit that adultery in order to be saved? If children have been born to that adulterous union, should they be allowed to live together to spare the children the suffering occasioned by separation?

2. To be honest with God, one must obey every known commandment of God. When the Jews learned they had violated God's commandment, they put away their foreign wives; when they learned they should live in booths one week, they immediately did it. When people learn that sprinkling is not baptism, that one must be buried and raised, and they refuse, are they honest with God?

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you learn from the Devotional Reading?
What did you get from the daily Bible readings?
What do you know of Ezra as to character, ability, and accomplishments?
How long between the return under Zerubbabel and that under Ezra?
How was Ezra affected by conditions he found in Jerusalem?

How many years between the coming of Ezra to Jerusalem and that of Nehemiah?
What ugly conditions did Nehemiah discover in Jerusalem?
Discuss the time, place, and persons of this lesson.
What provision did Moses make for the reading and teaching of the law?
What lessons did these people learn by the reading of the law by Ezra?
How did their attitude towards the law compare with that of most people today?
How did the people express their emotions at the reading of the law?
What caused Ezra and the people to weep, and who made confession for the people?
What suggested there was hope for the people?
What fine attitude toward teachers did Shecaniah express?
Why was Ezra obligated to take the lead in correcting these matters?
Is there a difference between the law of God, and the law of Moses?
What is meant by hearing with understanding?
Why is it not possible for all ages and grades to hear the same lesson with understanding?
How long did these Jews give attention to the reading of the law?
How do you think their interest in things divine compares with the average today?
What proof do we have that the people were honest with God?

Lesson VIII—November 21, 1948

THE MESSAGE OF ZECHARIAH

The Lesson Text

Zech. 8: 9-17

9 Thus saith Jĕ-hō'văh of hosts: Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words from the mouth of the prophets that were in the day that the foundation of the house of Jĕ-hō'văh of hosts was laid, even the temple, that it might be built.
10 For before those days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast; neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in, because of the adversary: for I set all men every one against his neighbor.
11 But now I will not be unto the remnant of this people as in the former days, saith Jĕ-hō'văh of hosts.
12 For *there shall be* the seed of peace; the vine shall give its fruit, and the ground shall give its increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all these things.
13 And it shall come to pass that, as ye were a curse among the nations, O house of Jū'dăh and house of Ĭs'rā-ĕl, so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing. Fear not, *but* let your hands be strong.
14 For thus saith Jĕ-hō'văh of hosts: As I thought to do evil unto you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith Jĕ-hō'văh of hosts, and I repented not;
15 So again have I thought in these days to do good unto Jĕ-ru'sā-lĕm and to the house of Jū'dăh: fear ye not.
16 These are the things that ye shall do: Speak ye every man the truth with his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates;
17 And let none of you devise evil in your hearts against his neighbor; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith Jĕ-hō'văh.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"These are the things that ye shall do: Speak ye every man the truth with his neighbor."* (Zech. 8: 16a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Zech. 6: 9-15.

Daily Bible Readings

November 15. M. ..... Jehovah Returns to Jerusalem (Zech. 1: 1-17)
November 16. T. ..... Jehovah Inherits Judah (Zech. 2: 1-13)
November 17. W. ..... Judah's Iniquity Taken Away (Zech. 3: 1-10)
November 18. T. ..... Temple Built by Zerubbabel (Zech. 4: 1-14)
November 19. F. ..... Vision of Flying Roll and Ephah (Zech. 5: 1-11)
November 20. S. ..... Sincere Obedience Demanded (Zech. 7: 1-14)
November 21. S. ..... Jehovah to Dwell in Midst of Zion (Zech. 8: 1-8)

Lesson Subject Explained

This lesson takes us back nearly three-quarters of a century, to the time when Zerubbabel was trying to build the temple in Jerusalem. Cyrus had given his permission for them to rebuild the temple but their Samaritan enemies had been successful in getting that permission withdrawn, and the work had to cease for a number of years. Then when Darius came to the throne he reissued the decree of Cyrus and permission was extended for the work on the temple. But the Jews had lost much of their interest in a temple. They had become so interested in building their own homes, and in making money that they had little time or desire to work on the temple. It was the place of the prophets to stir up the people and to renew their interest and give them fresh zeal to complete the work. Haggai was the first, and the older of the two prophets mentioned. There is a possibility that he was among the old people mentioned as having seen the glory of the first temple, and who were disappointed in the rebuilt temple. (Hag. 2: 3.)

Zechariah had an advantage of Haggai which lay in the fact that he was also a priest. There had always been some resentment of the prophets on the part of the priests, so that the prophet many times had to accomplish his work without the help of the priests, and sometimes in spite of the opposition of the priests. But since Zechariah combined the offices of priest and prophet he did not have this opposition; it also gave him an influence with the people that he would not otherwise have had.

"The foundations of the temple had indeed been laid, but that was all. (Ezra 4: 16.) Discouraged by the opposition which they had encountered at first, the Jewish colony had begun to build, and were not able to finish; and even when the letter came from Darius sanctioning the work, and promising his protection, they showed no hearty disposition to engage in it. At such a time, no more fitting instrument could be found to rouse the people, whose heart had grown cold, than one who united to the authority of the prophet the zeal and traditions of a sacerdotal family. Accordingly, to Zechariah's influence we find the rebuilding of the temple in a great measure ascribed. 'And the elders of the Jews builded,' it is said, 'and prospered, through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo.' (Ezra 6: 14.)" (Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.)

"In the true prophetic spirit, Zechariah, like Haggai, dwells entirely on the moral hindrances to the rebuilding of the temple. Fifteen years had passed since the return, and the walls of the sanctuary were not yet raised, while the city itself was being laboriously, and in some cases splendidly, restored. Haggai, a month before, had striven to rouse his contemporaries, by predicting that, notwithstanding appearances, the glory of the second house would be even greater than that of the first, but his words had had little effect. Zechariah,

therefore, warns them to take a lesson from the fate of their fathers. Their disobedience to the prophets had been their ruin; let no such result follow now from a similar course. The drought and the opposition from without showed that God was displeased; let them seek to regain his favor." (Geikie.)

Context of the Lesson

In the context of this lesson we find the people of Bethel sent representatives to the priests in Jerusalem to ask if they should continue to observe the fasts of the fifth month as they had been doing for so many years. This weeping of the fifth month was in memory of the burning of the temple, and the fast of the seventh month was in memory of the murder of Gedaliah. (Jer. 41: 1; 2 Kings 25: 25.) Those who had been left in the land had been keeping up a form of commemoration of these events, but Zechariah accused them of not having their hearts in these services. He warned them that the seventy years of exile came upon the people because they paid no attention to the prophets of old, that they did not do right from the heart even though they kept up the forms of sacrifices. They were to, "Execute true judgment, and show kindness and compassion every man to his brother; and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the sojourner, nor the poor; and let none of you devise evil against his brother in your heart. But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they might not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which Jehovah of hosts had sent by his Spirit by the former prophets: therefore there came great wrath from Jehovah of hosts." (Zech. 7: 9-12.)

But from all of this punishment Jehovah had turned. He was now ready to bless his people if they would turn to him; he would be their God, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and the city should be called the city of truth. The city should be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof, and there would be many old men and women in the city on account of living to a ripe old age.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date of this lesson is 518 B.C., eighteen years after the first return.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Zechariah, and the people.

Golden Text Explained

"Speak ye every man the truth with his neighbor." 1. The universality of the obligation. Every man. No one man has a right to indulge in a liberty, which, if indulged by all, would ruin the community. If all were to practice deception, no one have any regard for the truth, the very foundation of society would be destroyed. The business world operates largely on confidence in each other. Orders are made on the factory for goods in the confidence they will be filled. These goods are shipped to the merchant in the confidence he will pay for them. Men speak the truth with each other on these matters, and then live accordingly. But if all practice deception, and no one could have any confidence in others, business would come to

a standstill. The same is true in social, financial, and to some extent in political circles. The closer all men follow this admonition to speak the truth, the more harmoniously they work together, and the more profitable is their association.

2. Christians are to speak the truth to each other on account of their relation to each other. "Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor: for we are members one of another." (Eph. 4: 25.) Our relationship is so close that to practice deception on some other member of the body, is to injure ourselves.

3. We are to speak the truth because falsehood is inconsistent with our relationship with Christ. We have been buried with him by baptism into death to the old life of sin, with which falsehood was consistent; and we have been raised with him to walk in newness of life, with which only truth can be consistent. "Lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him." (Col. 3: 9, 10.) The old man with his doings included deception and lying; the new man which is in the image of Christ includes truth. Lying is so inconsistent with this new man that it cannot be tolerated.

4. Hypocrisy prevents spiritual growth. "Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation." (1 Pet. 2: 1, 2.)

5. Lying renders one unfit for heaven. John tells us that "all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." (Rev. 21: 8.) The devil is the father of lies; he is the source of all that is false. And those who deal in falsehoods are doing the work of the devil. Those who do the work of the devil all their lives on earth may expect to spend eternity with the devil.

Helps on the Lesson Text

Let your hands be strong. Zechariah had just told the people that Jehovah had said, "I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called The city of truth." This had been announced through the mouth of the prophets, and this was to give the people assurance that the prophets who prophesied at the time of the laying of the foundation of the temple were telling the truth. The whole effort here is to give the people courage, to fire them anew with zeal, to spur them to activity that they might go on to completion with the temple.

Before those days there was no hire for man. This suggests a time of poverty. When people cannot get work, hunger stalks the land. When the rich will not hire the poor to do the work and keep the factories and business houses open, depression sets in. The prophet says there was neither hire for man nor beast.

Neither was there any peace. Peace is enjoyed during times of great activity. When people are idle and hungry, it is easy to start a revolution. Idleness breeds sin. Young people who have no responsibilities, if allowed to get together, will soon be engaging in meanness, if not actual wickedness.

Because of the adversary. Zechariah says these evil conditions have come as a result of the adversary. The enemies had stopped the work on the temple, and many people had nothing to do. Continued hopes of getting started back to work on the temple kept many from starting to do anything else, hence the idleness and the sins which accompany it.

There shall be the seed of peace. Jehovah had promised that he would not be unto his people, the remnant, as he had been in former days; they would plant their seed in peace, and there would be prosperity. The vine would yield its fruit, the ground would give its increase, and the heavens would give sufficient moisture to supply the people.

As ye were a curse among the nations. For seventy years they had been a curse among the nations whither they had been scattered, but now Jehovah is going to make them a blessing. Instead of destroying them by wars and exile, he will save them by bringing them back to their land and being a God to them as in the days of old. This was Zechariah's way of encouraging them. Nothing excited the zeal of a Jew more than to remind him that Jehovah, the God of heaven and earth, was the God of Israel.

As I thought to do evil unto you,... and I repented not. Zechariah again makes a contrast in the actions of Jehovah with their fathers before the exile and his promised dealings with these discouraged people. God thought to do evil to their forefathers on account of their sins through which they provoked him to wrath. We must not think of God being provoked to wrath in the same sense in which we are provoked. Many times we are provoked to anger by our children or our neighbors doing things which do not please us. If they did the thing only once or twice we would not be angry, but the continuance of it is what we resent. But a sin is as bad in God's sight the first time it is done as it is when it is continued. And his wrath was manifested against Israel for their good, and not simply to get even with them for displeasing him.

Execute the judgment of truth and peace. This is one of the things Jehovah said for his people to do so that he might be their God and dwell among them. This advice sounds like that which the prophets gave their forefathers before the captivity. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Mic. 6: 8.) These are the fundamentals of upright and honorable dealings with each other. This is not the answer to the question, What must I do to be saved? but following this counsel goes a long way towards making a child of God a righteous person.

Let none of you devise evil in your hearts. Evil begins in the heart, and issues from it. (Mark 7: 20-23.) Devising evil in the heart defiles the heart, and causes one to be as guilty before God as if he had actually committed the sin. (Matt. 5: 27, 28.) "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." (Prov. 4: 23.)

And love no false oath. The Jews had various oaths and covenants which they made with God, and these he expected them to keep. Regarding lightly their oaths and breaking their covenants have always been regarded as sinful. The wicked Gentiles were

characterized as covenant breakers. (Rom. 1: 31.) And by comparing this sin with others in the list one can see what company the word keeps. Covenant breakers are classed with the vicious and vile. People today have a very low estimate of the character of a person who does not keep his word. Jehovah says these are the things he hates. No one should cultivate a love for anything which God hates.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

God wishes to be good to his people. We have had many lessons illustrating the severity of God, and these children may easily get the idea that God is more severe in his treatment of humanity than he is merciful and kind. But his goodness and kindness far outweigh his harshness in dealing with humanity. This is seen in the fact that he allows the wicked to live and prosper. But his holiness cannot always tolerate wickedness; and when his people are wicked he punishes them for their good. As parents punish children to correct them, so God corrects his people. But he delights in seeing his people do right, so he will not have to correct them. And nothing would please him better than to see all his creatures walking uprightly, so he would not have to punish any of them.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Building for eternity. Young people are builders. Every one of these boys and girls are building character, and into these characters is going some kind of material. The material is determined largely by what they see, hear, think, and the emotions they have as they associate with others. Truth, kindness, mercy, clean thoughts and conversation, honesty in school examinations, telling the truth when their parents question them about where they went and with whom they went the night before, these all are lasting material. But the opposites are light perishable material, and if built into the character, it will have to be torn out before they can become Christians. Each one should build into his character only such material as will last for ever.

Young People and Adult Departments

Ceremonies without righteousness are worthless. The Jews were strict to keep up their forms of worship, but often they became careless about the heart and life. Zechariah taught them that God was interested in their hearts more than in their ceremonies. We ought to learn this lesson and search our hearts often, examine our lives daily to see whether we are more careful to keep up the forms of Christianity than we are to keep pure hearts and clean hands. Paul urges all to cleanse themselves from the defilement of flesh and spirit. (2 Cor. 7: 1.)

Topics for Discussion

1. Capital plus labor equals peace. If capital refuses to hire labor, there will be idleness and hunger. If labor refuses to work for a fair wage, there will be idleness and hunger following. Each is dependent upon the other. Capital depends on labor for peace and security in which to enjoy his money and the pleasures it can buy.

Labor depends on capital for the necessities of life, that it may enjoy peace and prosperity. They therefore should work together. Brethren on both sides should teach what is right and set a good example before the world; it is their debt to society.

2. A nation without God is a curse to humanity; but that same people when turned back to God is a blessing to the world. The presence or absence of God, therefore, determines whether a people will be a blessing or a curse. The same is true of individuals.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
What part did Cyrus and Darius have in rebuilding the temple?
What part did the prophets have in rebuilding the temple?
What advantage did Zechariah have over Haggai?
Were the moral hindrances to rebuilding greater than the physical hindrances?
What question did the people of Bethel ask the prophets?
Discuss the time, place, and persons of this lesson.
How widespread is the obligation of honesty, and what are its fruits in business life?
Why are Christians to speak the truth to each other?
What prevents spiritual growth, and what is the consequence of lying?
What did Zechariah say of conditions when the people were not building?
How did he describe conditions when God returned to Zion to be their God?
How may God be provoked to wrath?
Discuss the things God says we are to do?
What things did he tell them not to do?
How does God's interest in these things compare with his love for ceremonies?
In what company is the covenant breaker classed?

Lesson IX—November 28, 1948

THE MESSAGE OF HAGGAI

The Lesson Text

Haggai 2: 10-19

10 In the four and twentieth *day* of the ninth *month*, in the second year of Dă-rī'ŭs, came the word of Jē-hō'văh by Hăg'gāi the prophet, saying,
11 Thus saith Jē-hō'văh of hosts: Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying,
12 If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any food, shall it become holy? And the priests answered and said, No.
13 Then said Hăg'gāi, If one that is unclean by reason of a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean.
14 Then answered Hăg'gāi and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith Jē-hō'văh; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean.

15 And now, I pray you, consider from this day and backward, before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of Jē-hō'vāh.
16 Through all that time, when one came to a heap of twenty *measures*, there were but ten; when one came to the winevat to draw out fifty *vessels*, there were but twenty.
17 I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the work of your hands; yet ye *turned* not to me, saith Jē-hō'vāh.
18 Consider, I pray you, from this day and backward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth *month*, since the day that the foundation of Jē-hō'vāh's temple was laid, consider it.
19 Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, the vine, and the fig-tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive-tree have not brought forth; from this day will I bless *you*.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"He that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes."* (Haggai 1: 6b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Haggai 1: 12-15.

Daily Bible Readings

November 22. M.....Putting Wages in Bags With Holes (Haggai 1: 1-6)
November 23. T.....People Exhorted to Build the Temple (Haggai 1: 7-11)
November 24. W.....Latter Glory of Temple to be Great (Haggai 2: 1-9)
November 25. T.....Zerubbabel The Lord's Chosen (Haggai 2: 20-23)
November 26. F.....A Place for Jehovah to Rest (Psalm 132: 1-18)
November 27. S.....Sorrows of Exiles in Babylon (Psalm 137: 1-9)
November 28. S.....Thankful for Return from Captivity (Psalm 126: 1-6)

Lesson Subject Explained

"It was in the second year of Darius Hystaspis, on the first day of the sixth month, September or October, B.C. 521 that Haggai first presented himself before Zerubbabel and Joshua, to stir both them and the people to renewed efforts towards the rebuilding of the temple. The exaggerated hopes of the first period of the return had died away. Instead of the glorious Messianic times they had expected, only trouble and disappointment had befallen them. It seemed as if they had been deceived by the prophets. Their zeal died away under such discouragement. After fifteen years, the altar on Mount Moriah, and the laying of the foundation stone, were the only results of their lofty anticipations that a temple grander than that of Solomon would speedily rise before them. But if they had been disappointed in this direction, their material circumstances had improved. Debarred from restoring the national sanctuary, but free in other respects, they had devoted themselves to worldly affairs. Fine houses, owned by the richer colonists, had risen among the ruins of Jerusalem, and this prosperity had still further lowered their religious tone. Warnings at the displeasure of God at their apathy and spiritual decline were not, however, wanting; for drouths had visited the land, the heavens had been 'stayed from dew,' and the earth 'from her fruit.' But they still urged that the time for rebuilding the house of God had not yet come; fresh permission, they maintained, being required from the great king. This hypocritical plea Haggai boldly met by a stern attack on their insincerity." (Geikie.)

Nothing is known of the place, or date of birth, or the parentage of Haggai. Jewish tradition says he was an associate of Daniel, and that he was among those who had seen the glory of Solomon's temple, and who wept when they saw the temple of Zerubbabel, though larger than Solomon's far less richly finished and furnished. The value of his work cannot be overestimated, as he came to the Jewish

people at a time when they were discouraged, and in fact had ceased to work on the temple. Had it not been for him and his younger associate, Zechariah, the temple would not have been built.

Context of the Lesson

"In his first message to the people the prophet denounced the listlessness of the Jews, who dwelt in their 'panelled houses,' while the temple of the Lord was roofless and desolate. The displeasure of God was manifested in the failure of all their efforts for their own gratification. The heavens were 'stayed from dew,' and the earth was 'stayed from her fruit.' They neglected that which should have been their first care, and reaped the due wages of their selfishness. (Haggai 1: 4-11.) The word of the prophet sank deep into the hearts of the people and their leaders. They acknowledged the voice of God speaking, by his servant, and obeyed the command. Their obedience was rewarded with the assurance of God's presence (Haggai 1: 13), and twenty-four days after the building was resumed. A month had scarcely elapsed when the work seems to have slackened, and the enthusiasm of the people abated. The prophet, ever ready to rekindle their zeal, encouraged the flagging spirits of the chiefs with the renewed assurance of God's presence, and the fresh promise that, stately and magnificent as was the temple of their wisest king, the glory of the latter house would be greater than the glory of the former. (Haggai 2: 3-9.) Yet the people were still inactive, and two months afterwards we find him again censuring their sluggishness, which rendered worthless all their ceremonial observances. But the rebuke was accompanied by a repetition of the promise. (Haggai 2: 10-19.) On the same day, the four-and-twentieth of the ninth month, the prophet delivered his last prophecy, addressed to Zerubbabel, the prince of Judah, the representative of the royal family of David, and as such the lineal ancestor of the Messiah. This closing prediction foreshadows the establishment of the Messianic kingdom upon the overthrow of the thrones of the nations. (Haggai 2: 20-23.)" (Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.)

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date of this lesson is 520 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Haggai, Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the people.

Golden Text Explained

The verse in which our Golden Text is found contains no less than five proverbs, all teaching the same fact. "Ye have sown much, and bring in little." Regardless of all your efforts to increase by sowing, you shall not prosper because you have turned your attention from the house of God and have spent your time and money on houses for yourselves. "Ye eat, but ye have not enough." Regardless of how much you eat, you are still hungry. Of course this is not to be taken in a literal physical sense. But as one whose body organs are not functioning properly so that he is still hungry regardless of how much he eats, so these people were wanting that genuine satisfaction which comes in life only to those who put God

first. All their activity of selfish interest could not satisfy the soul's need. They needed to give more attention to God and the doing of his commandment to build his house. "Ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink." This is the same figure as the above. "Ye clothe you, but there is none warm." When one is not in good physical condition he may put on extra heavy garments, or cover, and still be cold when a change of weather comes in the fall or winter. So these people were trying to find satisfaction in building houses for themselves instead of for God. They were interested more in their material security than they were in their religious and spiritual welfare. "And he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes." The figure is varied here, but the meaning is the same. It is difficult to fill a bucket with water when the bottom is full of holes. It is impossible to get rich putting money into a pocket with a big hole in the bottom of it. Their material prosperity was the bag with holes in it. Giving time and attention to that when they should be building for God was not going to bring them lasting prosperity.

1. Pleasure is a bag with holes in it. Those who give time and attention to the pleasures of this world when they should be visiting the sick, or teaching others the way of life are putting their money into a bag with holes in it. Innocent pleasures are right and good for people, but not at a time when we ought to be engaging in spiritual activities.

2. Social prominence is a bag with holes in it. People who give time, attention, and effort to social clubs in the hope they may gain prominence and power will find that even if they attain all they hoped to gain, they are none the better prepared to stand in the judgment before their judge. They have been putting their money into a bag with holes in it so far as laying up something which will help them to stand in the judgment.

3. Political power is a bag with holes in it. Brethren occasionally get the desire to wield a big influence in the county or state politics. Usually they have a little too much conscience to get anywhere politically; and they have too much politics to get anywhere spiritually. So they are likely not to realize their political ambitions in this life, and are in danger of losing eternal life in the world to come. But even if they should gain all the political power for which they strive here, of how much benefit will it be when they give account to the Lord in judgment?

4. Fraternal orders are bags with holes in them. Both men and women who belong to fraternal orders are in danger of giving time and effort to these orders which ought to be given to the church. Some brethren will take a leading part in the lodge, but they will not accept a position of responsibility in the church. Brethren have been known to visit the sick lodge brother, but they refuse to do such visiting for the church. Some expect their lodge to take the place of the blood-bought institution, so refuse to obey the gospel on the ground that the lodge is good enough for them. But being a member of the lodge and doing all the lodge requires of you will not commend you to God either in this life or in the judgment. The pleasure and satisfaction gained from such activities are of no lasting value, and the soul can no more be satisfied with such activities than

a bag can be filled with money when there is a big hole in the bottom of it.

Helps on the Lesson Text

In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month. The ninth month was called Chis-lev. (Zech. 7: 1.) It corresponds with parts of our November and December.

In the second year of Darius. Darius began his reign in 521 B.C. It will be good to go back to Ezra, chapters 5 and 6 to get some of the history connected with these activities. There we find that it was in this same year when activities had started under the encouragement of Haggai and Zechariah, that Tattenai, a governor on the west side of the Euphrates, commanded the Jews to cease building on the temple. But this governor did not have authority to stop them without taking time to write the king a letter. So he wrote Darius that he had commanded them to stop and that they had refused on the ground that Cyrus, sixteen years ago, had given them permission to build. Tattenai suggested to Darius that a search be made in the files of records to see if that was true. In the city of Achmetha (Ecbatana) in what is now India, a city used as a summer resort for kings of Persia, the records of Cyrus had been stored. And among them the original copy of the decree of Cyrus to rebuild the temple was found. Then Darius ordered Tattenai and his companions to cease all opposition to the work, and to give the Jews all the money they needed to finish the work. And in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the temple was finished.

Ask now the priests concerning the law. Haggai was suggesting that which the law required on such difficult matters. "If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, . . . being matters of controversy within thy gates; then shalt thou arise, and get thee up unto the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose; and thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days: and thou shalt inquire; and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment . . . and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they shall teach thee: according to the tenor of the law which they shall teach thee." (Deut. 17: 8-11.)

If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment. This referred to priests carrying meat offerings in their aprons. The law says that if the meat of the offering touched anything it became holy. (Lev. 6: 20.) There seems to be no statement in the law about the garment touching anything while carrying the meat. But Haggai was evidently satisfied with their answer, so we conclude that a thing was not rendered holy simply by the touch of a garment carrying holy meat.

If one that is unclean. Shall the touch of the unclean defile a clean thing? The answer here is Yes. And the law of Moses is very plain on this point. (Lev. 7: 21; 22: 4-9.)

So is this people. This was the prophet's way of making them see that they and their work were not acceptable to the Lord. They were unclean because of their disobedience, and everything they touched was unclean by reason of their uncleanness.

Consider, . . . from this day and backward. Think of your circumstances from this day back to the day you arrived in Jerusalem from

Babylon. A heap of corn, or a stack of grain, that shou'd net twenty measures would net but ten; the blast and the mildew had ruined so much that they had only half as much as a heap, or a stack, of that size should produce. And when they went to the winevat to draw off the wine from a load of grapes that should produce fifty vessels, they got but twenty. God was blasting their crops as punishment for their unfaithfulness, but even then they were slow to understand and repent. Then follows verse 18 with a repetition of this thought, to consider these matters. None were so blind but they could see such conditions; but seeing the conditions and recognizing them as from God and on account of sin was another thing, and one which they were slow to do.

Is the seed yet in the barn? With this verse begins a brighter note. There is seed in the barn which can be planted, and when planted this time God will bless it. Why the change in the Lord's attitude toward them? They have changed. The prophets have urged them to renewed activity for the Lord, and he is showing his love for them. The fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive-tree are yet to bud and bear, and the Lord assures them that these shall bear the limit of their capacity. The people have turned away from their selfish material interests, and have renewed their interests in Jehovah's house. At the suggestion of the prophets they have refused to be discouraged by the opposition of the enemy, and they are giving of their time and efforts to the Lord, so the Lord will bless them.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

God gives us our good things in life. All through the lesson one is impressed with the wayward condition of the people from the time they ceased to build until the time Haggai and Zechariah urged them to commence again; and the displeasure of God with such conditions is made to stand out. But in the very last verse Jehovah promised to bless the people because they had started again to do his work. They had failures when they disobeyed, but now they are promised successes because they are obeying the commandments of the Lord. So God gives us our good things in life when we obey him.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Unclean things defile us. One cannot handle lampblack without getting some of it on him; and those who work in the dirt and dust of the harvest field need to wash when the day is over. Boys and girls cannot engage in evil without becoming defiled. Jesus said such defile us, and there is no handling such things without defilement. (Mark 7: 20-23.) Paul says, "Evil companionships corrupt good morals." (1 Cor. 15: 33.) Boys and girls of this age need such truth held before them often. They are in that stage where they are liable to think they can resist evil. And they are likely not to appreciate the danger which is involved in evil companionships. Teachers sometimes have more influence on youths of this age than their parents; at least the earnest warnings of teachers will reenforce the teaching of parents and make it much more effective.

Young People and Adult Departments

The bag without a hole, may well be the topic for these departments. Going back to the thought of the Golden Text, several things are mentioned as bags with holes in them. But the church is one thing which may be likened to a bag without a hole in it. Service performed there is never disappointing. One may become discouraged on account of conditions, but his labor is never in vain, and his discouragement is likely due to a lack of faith. Those who spend their years of service in lodges and civic clubs will get no reward; but those who give time and effort to promoting the interests of the church will have a great reward in this life, and in the world to come they will receive eternal life.

Topics for Discussion

1. "Keep thyself pure." (1 Tim. 5: 22.) "Touch no unclean thing." (2 Cor. 6: 17.) "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.) In these verses we are told what it is that defiles us, and we are told to keep ourselves pure; hence our duty ought to be clear. Touch not, engage not in, these unclean things.

2. Consider backward, was the admonition of Haggai. Consider what you have been doing; measure that with what the Lord expects of you. This should bring the best of us to a sense of unworthiness, and cause us to pray, God, be merciful to me a sinner. (Luke 18: 13.)

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you learn from the Devotional Reading?
What did you get from the daily Bible readings?
What were the conditions in Jerusalem in the second year of Darius?
Of what did Haggai's first message of prophecy treat?
What do you know of Haggai's background, and his work?
Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.
Discuss the figures of speech connected with our Golden Text, and their meaning.
How can pleasures of this world be said to be like a bag with holes it it?
Why is social prominence like a bag with holes in it?
Why is political power and prominence like a bag with holes in it?
In what way are fraternal orders like a bag with holes in it?
In what month, and in what year did Haggai give this prophecy?
Review the history of the efforts of the Jews to rebuild the temple.
Who were to be expositors of the law, and why?
What two questions did Haggai ask the priests, and what lesson did he teach?
What conditions did Haggai say prevailed from that day backward, and why?
What promise did he make for the future, and why?
Does the Lord so deal with us today?

Lesson X—December 5, 1948

NEHEMIAH REBUILDS THE WALLS

The Lesson Text

Neh. 3: 1-12

1 Then Ĕ-lī'ă-shĭb the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests, and they builded the sheep gate; they sanctified it, and set up the doors of it; even unto the tower of Hăm-mĕ'āh they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hă-nan'ĕl.
2 And next unto him builded the men of Jĕr'ĭ-chō. And next to them builded Zăc'cŭr the son of Ĭm'rī.
3 And the fish gate did the sons of Hăs-sĕ-nā'ăh build; they laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, the bolts thereof, and the bars thereof.
4 And next unto them repaired Mĕr'ĕ-mŏth the son of Ū-rī'āh, the son of Hăk'kōz. And next unto them repaired Mĕ-shŭl'lăm the son of Bĕr-ĕ-chī'āh, the son of Mĕ-shĕz'ă-bĕl. And next unto them repaired Zā'dŏk the son of Bā'ă-nā.
5 And next unto them the Tĕ-kō'ĭtes repaired; but their nobles put not their necks to the work of their lord.
6 And the old gate repaired Joi'ă-dā the son of Pă-sē'āh and Mĕ-shŭl'lăm the son of Bĕs-o-dĕ'ĭăh; they laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, and the bolts thereof, and the bars thereof.
7 And next unto them repaired Mĕl-ă-tī'āh the Gĭb'ĕ-ōn-īte, and Jā'dŏn the Mĕ-rŏn'o-thīte, the men of Gĭb'ĕ-ōn, and of Mĭz'pāh, *that appertained* to the throne of the governor beyond the River.
8 Next unto him repaired Ŭz-zī'ĕl the son of Hăr-hā'ĭăh, goldsmiths. And next unto him repaired Hăn-ă-nī'āh one of the perfumers, and they fortified Jĕ-ru'sā-lĕm even unto the broad wall.
9 And next unto them repaired Rĕ-phā'ĭăh the son of Hur, the ruler of half the district of Jĕ-ru'sā-lĕm.
10 And next unto them repaired Jĕ-dā'ĭăh the son of Hă-ru'măph, over against his house. And next unto him repaired Hăt'tūsh the son of Hăsh-ăb-neī'ăh.
11 Măl-chī'jăh the son of Hā'rĭm, and Hăs'shŭb the son of Pā'hăth-mō'āb, repaired another portion, and the tower of the furnaces.
12 And next unto him repaired Shăl'lŭm the son of Hăl-lō'hĕsh, the ruler of half the district of Jĕ-ru'sā-lĕm, he and his daughters.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"*So we built the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto half the height thereof: for the people had a mind to work.*" (Neh. 4: 6.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Neh. 3: 28-32.

Daily Bible Readings

November 29.	M.	Nehemiah Permitted to Go to Jerusalem (Neh. 2: 1-8)
November 30.	T.	Enemies of Jerusalem Grieved at His Coming (Neh. 2: 9-16)
December 1.	W.	Nehemiah Urges the Jews to Rebuild (Neh. 2: 17-20)
December 2.	T.	Distribution of Labor for Speed (Neh. 3: 13-27)
December 3.	F.	Jehovah Builds Up Jerusalem (Psalm 147: 1-20)
December 4.	S.	Jehovah Excels the Gods of the Heathen (Psalm 115: 1-18)
December 5.	S.	All Creation to Praise Jehovah (Psalm 148: 1-14)

Lesson Subject Explained

"Nehemiah's great work was rebuilding, for the first time since their destruction by Nebuzaradan, the walls of Jerusalem, and restoring that city to its former state and dignity, as a fortified town. It is impossible to overestimate the importance to the future political and ecclesiastical prosperity of the Jewish nation of this great achievement of their patriotic governor. How low the community of the Palestine Jews had fallen, is apparent from the fact that from the sixth of Darius to the seventh of Artaxerxes, there is no history of them whatever; and that even after Ezra's commission, and the

ample grants made by Artaxerxes in his seventh year, and the considerable reinforcements, both in wealth and numbers, which Ezra's government brought to them, they were in a state of abject 'affliction and reproach' in the twentieth of Artaxerxes; their country pillaged, their citizens kidnapped and made slaves of by their heathen neighbors, robbery and murder rife in their very capital, Jerusalem almost deserted, and the temple falling again into decay. The one step which could resuscitate the nation, preserve the Mosaic institutions, and lay the foundation for future independence, was the restoration of the city walls. Jerusalem being once again secure from the attacks of the marauding heathen, civil government would become possible, the spirit of the people, and their attachment to the ancient capital of the monarchy would revive, the priests and the Levites would be encouraged to come into residence, the tithes and first-fruits and other stores would be safe, and Judah, if not actually independent, would preserve the essentials of national and religious life. To this great object therefore Nehemiah directed his whole energies without an hour's necessary delay. By word and example he induced the whole population, with the single exception of the Tekoite nobles, to commence building with the utmost vigor, even the lukewarm high priest Eliashib performing his part. In a wonderfully short time the walls seemed to emerge from the heaps of burnt rubbish, and to encircle the city as in the days of old. The gateways also were rebuilt, and ready for the doors to be hung upon them." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary.*)

Context of the Lesson

The brother of Nehemiah, Hanani, went from Jerusalem to Shushan, the capital of Persia, and told Nehemiah the conditions which prevailed in Palestine. Nehemiah was very much grieved, and could not hide his grief from the king before whom he served as cupbearer. When the king noticed his sad countenance he asked Nehemiah of his sorrow. With a prayer in his heart and the wisest words he could choose upon his lips, Nehemiah told his king the sorrow of his heart on account of the conditions in Jerusalem. Both the king and the queen were touched with his story, and he was granted permission to go to Jerusalem to do what he could to better conditions. As he journeyed towards Jerusalem he met Sanballat and Tobiah, governors of small territories between Babylon and Jerusalem, and told them of his intentions, and "it grieved them exceedingly, for that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel." When Nehemiah had been in Jerusalem three days he selected "some few men" to go with him in the darkness of night to inspect the walls that he might make an estimate of the time, material, and labor which would be needed in rebuilding the walls. He made a complete circuit of the city examining the ruins of the walls and the gates, but telling no man, not even the rulers, of his intentions until it was time to start the work. Then he called the people together and told them his intentions. He assured them that God would be with them in the effort, and that success would be theirs if only they would work faithfully and perseveringly. Sanballat and Tobiah heard of the beginning of the work and they ridiculed the effort. But scorn and ridicule were not enough to stop the determined spirit of Nehemiah. His plan was to put to work every man who was able to work,

from the least to the greatest, and from the poorest to the richest, that he might finish the task before the enemies would have time to make a complaint to the king and get an order to have the work stopped. They had been able to do this when the temple was being built, and Nehemiah suspected they would try again to stop the rebuilding of the walls.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date of this lesson is 445 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Nehemiah, and the people.

Golden Text Explained

"So we built the wall." Nehemiah was willing to give credit where credit was due. He did not try to take all the honor for the rebuilding of the walls. We built the walls; not I built the wall. Humility is a very beautiful characteristic, and the lack of it renders a person contemptible indeed. It would have been human for Nehemiah to put himself forward. He held a high office in the nation; he was a personal friend and associate of the king; and now he has come to Jerusalem to help the people. He might easily have felt that the people should look up to him and honor him; he might reasonably have thought that they owed him something since he was there not for his personal welfare, but to assist them to do things for themselves. But he was big enough to forget self and think in terms of the people. No wonder he got the fullest cooperation of the people. We are so made that we will follow very well, but we will not be driven anywhere to do any thing.

"The wall was joined together unto half the height thereof." This is a peculiar form of expression. It seems to indicate that the different groups of workmen each completed the part assigned to them, and that the parts were joined together, thus making the wall complete as to the length of it. The wall reached all the way around the city, no part being left undone. But unto half the height thereof seems to indicate that this rebuilt wall was only half as high as the old wall. Time and money both were short, and Nehemiah thought better to build a wall all around the city half as high as the former wall, than to build half way around the city a wall that was as high as the old wall.

"For the people had a mind to work." The people had their hearts in the work. The prophet finally got them so stirred up and determined to do the job that their hearts were in the work. The heart, or mind, is composed of intellect, will power, and emotion. Their intellect was involved because they could see the necessity of a wall; they could appreciate the benefits to be derived from the wall. They were being robbed and carried away into slavery because they had no wall to protect them.

The emotions of the people were in this project. They loved Jerusalem, the place where God delighted to meet and bless his people. They loved their temple completed at such great sacrifice of time and effort and money, and the erection of a wall was necessary to save that temple from being robbed and ruined.

The will power of the people was in this work. Under the encouragement of Nehemiah they had become determined to finish the job at all cost. They stayed on the job almost day and night. They worked with their weapons so close that they could pick them up for use on a moment's notice.

The church needs just such workers in every community today. The intellect of people must be touched; they must be able to render an intelligent service. Study of the Bible is a necessity with a Christian. A worker without knowledge of God's will is liable to do more harm than good for the church. The emotions of people must be stirred; they must do church work because they love God and his Son, and because they love lost souls more than they love pleasures of this life. And the will power of the people must be involved; they must be determined to do the Lord's will at any cost of time and money. When people are of this mind, or heart, great things can be accomplished in a short time.

Helps on the Lesson Text

Then Eliashib the high priest . . . and they builded the sheep gate. Of this high priest we know very little. A few years later we find him allied with Tobiah, the enemy of God's people, and even providing him a room in the temple "where aforetime they laid the meal-offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the grain, the new wine, and the oil, which were given by commandment to the Levites." (Neh. 13: 5.) And his grandson had married the daughter of Sanballat. (Neh. 13: 28.) So it seems that he and his family were entirely too closely related to the worst enemies God's people had. People thus associated with the enemies of the Lord and his people cannot make a serious claim to being loyal and faithful to God and the church.

Unto the tower of Hananel. From the sheepgate to this tower was the section rebuilt by the priests. Not even the priests were exempt from this hard labor. This name seems to be used to refer to the same as Hammeah, which means the hundred, in the same verse. Of these towers and gates very little is known for certain. Adam Clarke comments, "We really know scarcely anything about these gates—what they were, why called by these names, or in what part of the wall situated. All plans of Jerusalem, its temple, walls, and gates, are mere works of conjecture; and yet how learnedly have some men written on all these subjects."

They laid the beams thereof. In this verse we get some idea of the different parts which were used in a gate. There were beams, or heavy timber, which made the frame for the gate; then there were the doors, one swinging from each side covering half the distance between the beams; and the bolts and bars of which the hinges and locks were made.

Next unto them the Tekoites. Tekoa was a town six miles south of Bethlehem. It was in a poor section of the country, and was situated in a sheep-raising section of the country. It was founded by a man of the tribe of Judah named Ashhur. (1 Chron. 2: 24; 4: 5.) How many of these Tekoites took part in the rebuilding of the wall is not known, but they took the responsibility of rebuilding two lengths of the wall. (See verse 27.) However their nobles refused to do any of the work. This circumstance might have led the

common people to accept the responsibility for the second assignment in the hope that they might remove the reproach brought upon them by their nobles. Whether these nobles refused to work because they were not in sympathy with the project, or just thought hard manual labor beneath their dignity is not revealed, and it would be useless for us to conjecture.

And next unto them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite. This man was a descendant of that tribe of people who deceived Joshua and made a covenant with him guaranteeing their safety. They made as if they had come a long distance to make the covenant, and that since they lived so far away they were not among the people of the land to be destroyed. (Josh. 9.) They then became the slaves of the people of Israel. But this man here takes a part as any ordinary citizen, so we may suppose that he had adopted the religion of the Jews, and was by them accepted as one of their people.

Throne of the governor beyond the River. Here it is said that the towns of Gibeon and Mizpah belonged to the throne of the governor beyond the river. The river here means the Euphrates; and beyond means east. Or this statement may mean that the men of these towns repaired that section of the wall which appertained to the house of the governor from beyond the river. The king of Persia appointed a governor who lived in Jerusalem.

Rephaiah the son of Hur, the ruler of half the district of Jerusalem. It has been suggested that Jerusalem was divided into two districts, and that one-half was under a man of the tribe of Judah and the other half under a man of the tribe of Benjamin. These rulers of course were under the authority of the governor appointed by the king of Persia. This man is said to be the son of Hur. Whether this means that he was a descendant of Hur who helped Aaron hold up the hands of Moses (Ex. 17: 10), or the son of another man by that name we cannot know. The inference is that this Hur is not the one who lived in the time of Moses, or some mention of the fact would have been made.

Shallum the son of Hallohesh. This man was the ruler of the other half of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was not the only district thus divided. (See verse 18.) Here again we see that power and position did not exempt these people from the hard labor on the walls.

He and his daughters. Whether other women worked on the walls we cannot know. But these daughters were willing to help their father carry his part of the responsibility for the safety and welfare of the city. Women through all ages have been willing to do their part in the Lord's work; and were it not for them today the churches would not be doing very much for the poor, the widows, and the orphans.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Building walls of habit would be a good topic for the lesson in these classes. Walls were built around cities for protection, to keep the enemy from coming in to rob and kill at night. Walls of habit are for the protection of our character. We form habits of doing good, habits of purity of thought and speech, habits of obedience to

parents, and these habits keep us from doing wrong; they keep our enemy, Satan, from tempting us from the paths of right and purity. Every day these children are adding stones to that wall if they are trying to do right and good. But if they are disobeying their parents, or using ugly words, they are tearing down that wall and exposing themselves that much more to the enemy of their souls. How many stones can each one place in the wall every day?

Intermediate and Senior Departments

He who serves most is greatest. These priests, and even the high priest, served right along with the rest of the people. They did not expect their position to exempt them from responsibility. The nobles of Tekoa are given dishonorable mention because they put not their necks to the work. Jesus came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. (Matt. 20: 28.) And in this connection he taught that whosoever would become great, let him be your minister, or servant. Boys and girls may get the idea that position in the church is something for which to seek. He that desires the bishop's office desires a good work. (1 Tim. 3: 1.) It is a work, not a place of power, a lofty height from which to look down upon others. Office and position are terms which minister to our pride. Let us rather look for opportunities to render the greatest service.

Young People and Adult Departments

The thoughts suggested above are appropriate here. And in addition this lesson presents a fine opportunity to teach the benefit and necessity of cooperation. Had all the priests and nobles been like those of Tekoa, the walls would never have been finished. If every member of the church were just like me, how much would this church be doing? This is a fine question for each member to ask.

Topics for Discussion

1. When priests and rulers worked, they (1) Dignified labor. Honorable labor is not beneath the dignity of any, be he priest or king. (2) Encouraged others to work. So in the church, when the preacher and elders are willing to set the example of working among the sick, the poor, and the wayward, they encourage others, as well as show how the work should be done. (3) Inspired confidence in their leadership. There is nothing which makes men love and appreciate a foreman more than his willingness to work along with them. People do not like to be driven, but they will follow a worker anywhere. (4) They suggested the brotherhood and equality of all men. The rich and poor, the high and low, all were exposed to danger as long as they had no walls. Being equally exposed to danger, they had equal obligations to work. So today we all are equally exposed to the dangers of sin, and so are equally obligated to work for the maintenance of the church, to support it with our time and money, and to give of our mental and physical strength that it may live and grow.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?

What was Nehemiah's greatest work, and how long was he in doing it?
What was the condition of the people of Israel when Nehemiah came to them?
Why was a wall about the city so necessary?
Tell how Nehemiah got permission to go to Jerusalem.
How long had he been there before he started to work?
How did he ascertain the needs of the city?
Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.
What suggests the humility of Nehemiah, and is that a valuable trait in leaders now?
How did this wall compare with the old wall in length and in height?
What is included in having a mind to work?
Who was the high priest in Jerusalem, and what part did he do in the work?
What is known of the gates and towers of the city?
What do you know of the Tekoites, and their nobles?
What man who was not a Jew had part in building the wall?
What do you know of the governor, and the rulers of Jerusalem?
What women had a part in building the wall?
How much church work would go undone today if the women ceased to work?

Lesson XI—December 12, 1948

WORK PROGRESSES UNDER ADVERSITIES

The Lesson Text

Neh. 4: 1-14

1 But it came to pass that, when Săn-băl'lăt heard that we were building the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews.
2 And he spake before his brethren and the army of Să-mā'rĭ-ā, and said, What are these feeble Jews doing? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, seeing they are burned?
3 Now To-bī'ăh the Ăm'mŏn-ĭte was by him, and he said, Even that which they are building, if a fox go up, he shall break down their stone wall.
4 Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn back their reproach upon their own head, and give them up for a spoil in a land of captivity;
5 And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee; for they have provoked *thee* to anger before the builders.
6 So we built the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto half *the height* thereof: for the people had a mind to work.
7 But it came to pass that, when Săn-băl'lăt, and To-bī'ăh, and the Ă-rā'-bĭ-ăns, and the Ăm'mŏn-ĭtes, and the Ăsh'dŏd-ĭtes, heard that the repairing of the walls of Jē-ru'sā-lĕm went forward, *and* that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth;
8 And they conspired all of them together to come and fight against Jē-ru'-sā-lĕm, and to cause confusion therein.
9 But we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.
10 And Jū'dăh said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall.
11 And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come into the midst of them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease.
12 And it came to pass that, when the Jews that dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times from all places, Ye must return unto us.
13 Therefore set I in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, in the open places, I set *there* the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows.

14 And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, who is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"He rescueth me from mine enemies."* (Psalm 18: 48a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Neh. 4: 21-23.

Daily Bible Readings

December 6. M. ..... The Builders Carry their Swords (Neh. 4: 15-20)
December 7. T. ..... Hindering Conditions Within the City (Neh. 5: 1-5)
December 8. W. ..... Nehemiah's Prompt Corrections (Neh. 5: 6-13)
December 9. T. ..... Nehemiah's Good Example (Neh. 5: 14-19)
December 10. F. .. Nehemiah Refused Conference with Enemies (Neh. 6: 1-9)
December 11. S. ..... A Prophet Helps the Enemy (Neh. 6: 10-14)
December 12. S. ..... Walls Finished in Fifty-two Days (Neh. 6: 15-19)

Lesson Subject Explained

"It soon became apparent how wisely Nehemiah had acted in hastening on the work. On his very first arrival, as governor, Sanballat and Tobiah had given unequivocal proof of their mortification at his appointment; and, before the work was even commenced, had scornfully asked whether he intended to rebel against the king of Persia. But when the restoration was seen to be rapidly progressing, their indignation knew no bounds. They not only poured out a torrent of abuse and contempt upon all engaged in the work, but actually made a great conspiracy to fall upon the builders with an armed force and put a stop to the undertaking. The project was defeated by the vigilance and prudence of Nehemiah, who armed all the people after their families, and showed such a strong front that their enemies dared not attack them. This armed attitude was continued from that day forward. Various stratagems were then resorted to to get Nehemiah away from Jerusalem, and if possible take his life. But that which most nearly succeeded was the attempt to bring him into suspicion with the king of Persia, as if he intended to set himself up for an independent king, as soon as the walls were completed. It was thought that the accusation of rebellion would also frighten the Jews themselves, and make them cease from building. Accordingly a double line of action was taken. On the one hand Sanballat wrote a letter to Nehemiah, in an apparently friendly tone, telling him, on the authority of Geshem, that it was reported among the heathen (i.e. the heathen nations settled in Samaria, and Galilee of the nations), that he was about to head a rebellion of the Jews, and that he had appointed prophets to aid in the design by prophesying of him, 'thou art the king of Judah'; and that he was building the walls for this purpose. This was sure, he added, to come to the ears of the king of Persia, and he invited Nehemiah to confer with him as to what should be done. At the same time he had also bribed Noadiah the prophetess, and other prophets, to induce Nehemiah by representations of his being in danger, to take refuge in the fortress of the temple, with a view to cause delay, and also to give an appearance of conscious guilt. While this portion of the plot was conducted by Sanballat and Tobiah, a yet more important line of action was pursued in concert with them by the chief officers of the king of Persia in Samaria. In a letter addressed to Artaxerxes they represented that

the Jews had rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, with the intent of rebelling against the king's authority and recovering their dominion on 'this side of the river.' Referring to former instances of the seditious spirit of the Jewish people, they urged that if the king wished to maintain his power in the province he must immediately put a stop to the fortification. This artful letter so far wrought upon Artaxerxes, that he issued a decree stopping the work till further orders. It is probable that at the same time he recalled Nehemiah, or perhaps Nehemiah's leave of absence had previously expired; in either case had the Tirshatha been less upright and less wise, and had he fallen into the trap laid for him, his life might have been in great danger. The sequel, however, shows that his perfect integrity was apparent to the king. For after a delay, perhaps of several years, he was permitted to return to Jerusalem, and to crown his work by repairing the temple, and dedicating the walls." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.)

Context of the Lesson

"The task before the citizens was a heavy one for all. To remove the mounds of rubbish from the broken parts of the walls, and dress the stones afresh, involved immense labor; for the number of workmen and laborers was limited in so small a population, and there were no funds with which to hire outside help. Everything had to be done by the people themselves. The whole circuit of the walls needed repair or entire rebuilding, and the gateways, when finished, required huge broad-leaved gates, with their massive bars, bolts, and locks. The thickness and heights of the defenses, and the irregularities of the ground, made the task still heavier. As a whole, the community was in an admirable mood, but the oppressive toil under a fierce sun and with imperfect appliances, soon broke down not a few, even before the rubbish had been cleared away." (Geikie.)

There were other difficulties to keep the work from progressing. Many of the people depended on their earnings to buy food. Their savings, if they had any at all, were soon exhausted. The rich demanded security when they borrowed, and soon some were even mortgaging their children who were in turn becoming the slaves of the rich. It is thought by some commentators that these people were forced to work on the walls, as Solomon forced even some of his own people to work on the temple. If that be true it would be a little difficult to account for the nobles of Tekoa getting by with their refusal to work with no more punishment than a dishonorable mention. But unless there was pressure of some kind it certainly is remarkable how loyal these people were to continue building the wall without remuneration when they were mortgaging their children for bread. But as soon as Nehemiah learned of this ungodly practice, he called the lenders together and made them return the fields, grain, and everything they had taken in usury, and exacted a promise from them that they would discontinue the practice.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date of this lesson is 445 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Nehemiah, Sanballat, Tobiah.

Golden Text Explained

"He rescueth me from mine enemies." Our Golden Text is a statement taken from a Psalm which David wrote on the occasion of his deliverance from the hand of Saul who was making every effort possible to kill David. David felt sure that his life was spared only because of God's protection. He further said God delivered him from the violent man. And because of that deliverance he would sing praises to Jehovah.

This is a fitting text for this lesson. Nehemiah had wily enemies outside Jerusalem who would have been glad to stop his work, and even to take his life. He had to be on guard constantly to figure out their schemes and detect the deceit which they practiced on him.

They requested that he come to them for a conference, which if he had done they would have taken him prisoner and the work on the walls would have been stopped. He also had enemies within the city who were in constant communication with the enemies outside. Had he been left to his own resources he might have been trapped and would have fallen a victim to their devices. But Nehemiah was not alone in this fight. He said the hand of God was upon him (Neh. 2: 18), and he was not fighting the people's battles singlehanded. From all their wicked schemes Jehovah rescued him.

Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." (Matt. 6: 13.) And Paul said, "But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and guard you from the evil one." (2 Thess. 3: 3.) Satan has had nearly six thousand years' experience in tempting the human race. He has had remarkable success in his work. If we were left entirely on our own, without any help of any kind from God, the devil would get all of us. Jesus died that he might deliver us out of this present evil world. (Gal. 1: 4.) And John says that Jesus was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3: 8.) And we, like David, are obligated to give thanks to God for his help in times of temptations, and for his ability to guard us from the evil one.

But the devil does not work alone; he uses evil men. So Paul asked others to pray for him that he might be delivered from unreasonable and evil men. (2 Thess. 3: 1, 2.) And he prayed that he might be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea. (Rom 15: 31.) Nehemiah needed to be delivered from such men. And we should pray for such deliverance from our enemies who persecute us and say all manner of evil against us in false accusations.

Helps on the Lesson Text

Sanballat spake before his brethren and the army. This man was governor of some small portion, or province, of Persia, and had his authority from the king of Persia. But he had no jurisdiction over Jerusalem. His speech before the army was for the purpose of encouraging them to help him in an unauthorized conflict with the Jews. He did not dare do it in a formal legal manner, as that action might come to the ears of the king.

What are these feeble Jews doing? He resorts to ridicule. In the question, Will they fortify themselves, he insinuates that the Jews were building the wall with the intention of rebelling against Persia, and that they expect to find safety behind the walls they were build-

ing. If the army was loyal to the king of Persia it would not take more than this to stir them to action against the Jews to protect the interests of the king.

Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him. Sanballat was a Moabite. The Moabites and the Ammonites were the descendants of the daughters of Lot. (Gen. 19: 36-38.) They were always enemies of the Jews, and on account of that they were not allowed to have any portion in the congregation of Israel. (Deut. 23: 3, 4.) Thus Tobiah added his word of ridicule before the army by saying that even if a fox were to walk upon the wall the Jews were building it would fall.

Hear, O our God; for we are despised. When these things came to the ears of Nehemiah he felt their sting, and prayed to God. His prayer is not an example for a Christian to follow, if our translation of it be correct. Adam Clarke says, "These are the most terrible imprecations; but probably we should understand them as declaratory, for the same form of the verb, in the Hebrew, is used as precative and imperative. Turn their reproach. Their reproach shall be turned. Give them for a prey. They shall be given for a prey . . . All who know the genius of the Hebrew language, know that the future tense is used to express all these senses." So it is possible that Nehemiah was not wishing all these things upon his enemies; but it is hardly contrary to the standards and ideals of his time for him to do so. But it is definitely contrary to the spirit and teaching of Jesus to wish such things upon our enemies. (Matt. 5: 10-12, 38-48.) Clarke further says in an effort to justify Nehemiah in this strong language that these curses applied only to the bodies, not the souls, of his enemies. But when he prayed God not to blot out their sins it seems that their souls were involved. It is possible that Nehemiah spoke this prayer by inspiration and for the encouragement of the Jews, and that these were just pronouncements of the punishment to come upon them for their opposition to the work.

And the Arabians. These were Ishmaelites and the descendants of Keturah. Before the captivity these Arabians were tributaries of Judah. But during the captivity they spread over the country formerly occupied by the Jews. The return of the Jews would mean a move for these Arabians, hence they opposed the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Geshem is mentioned as being one of them and an associate of Sanballat and Tobiah. (Neh. 6: 1.)

And the Ashdodites. These were the people of Ashdod, or Azotus. This was a town of the Philistines, near the Mediterranean sea and midway between Gaza and Joppa. It was in the territory assigned to Judah (Josh. 15: 47), but was never subdued, even during the reigns of David and Solomon. They evidently had spread out during the captivity, and so hated to see Jerusalem rebuilt as it would mean the loss of territory to them.

And they conspired all of them together. Here are four tribes, or provinces cooperating in their opposition to the Jews.

To fight and cause confusion. It seems that they feared the strength of Jerusalem and felt that they could not capture the city. But they could hope to muster sufficient strength to delay the work by striking at unexpected moments; and they could keep up confusion within the city and keep the people confused and discouraged. These intentions are evidence of a mean spirit in these men. Sometimes brethren who fail to get their way in affairs of the congrega-

tion resort to causing confusion in the ranks to keep from succeeding those works they have opposed. So mean a spirit is not worthy of church membership.

Be not afraid of them: remember the Lord. With such enemies there was need for encouragement. So Nehemiah told them to remember the Lord. The Lord had often fought for his people, and surely he would do so again. This is a source of real encouragement.

Fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives. Nehemiah knew how to stir up the emotions of the people; he knew what appeals to the spirit of patriotism. He told them they would lose their wives and daughters to rough unprincipled men if they did not protect them. So they worked with their weapons within reach, and were ready to use them on short notice. Such precaution, and such courage, and preparation saved the cause.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

For those teachers who use sand tables and flannel boards this lesson affords a good opportunity to illustrate the work of Nehemiah. Show a city within a wall partially built; show men working on the wall with swords hanging from their belts, and other weapons near, or being held by women and children; then show the enemies in the distance waiting for the builders to relax their watchfulness. From this the lesson of watchfulness against temptations, the meanness of our enemy, and the goodness of God in rescuing us from our enemies may be taught.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Faithful in spite of adverse opinions is a good topic for these departments. These boys and girls are in an age when they feel keenly the weight of opinions of others. They are liable to allow the opinions of their teachers in school to keep them from doing right, or cause them to do things they know Christians should not do. The opinions of their classmates will have a lot to do with where they go and the plane on which they live. Nehemiah and his people worked on in spite of these adverse opinions, and we must keep right on doing the will of the Lord regardless of what other people think about us. John the Baptist lost his life because a king was afraid of the opinion of those who were with him. (Matt. 14: 9.) Public opinion is a great force in the lives of all; it can move us to great deeds of loyalty and patriotism; it can move us to make great sacrifices for the Lord; and it can lead us to stoop to low bestial deeds if we are not careful.

Young People and Adult Departments

The thoughts suggested above are practical for these departments. In addition, notice the conditions under which they worked. 1. The strength of the workers was gone. (Verse 10.) 2. Their adversaries plotted their ruin. (Verse 11.) 3. Friendly Jews who lived among the enemies advised the people to give up and return to live among them. Our respect for Nehemiah and his helpers is heightened when we see how persistently they worked in spite of such opposition from without and within. We need church workers with such determination and perseverance.

Topics for Discussion

1. Opposition to a good work is always unjustified. (1) It is mean. These enemies had no principle. They first wished to have a part in the work; but when denied that they opposed the work. (2) It is usually selfish. These men belonged to tribes who had been traditional enemies of the Jews. During the captivity of the Jews they had enjoyed more freedom to spread out in Palestine. The return of the Jews would stop that, and perhaps drive them back into their original territory.

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
When did Nehemiah first notice the opposition of his enemies?
To what mean tricks did his enemies resort to stop the work?
What effect did their letters have upon the king?
What were some of the hindrances within the city?
What did Nehemiah do about the ungodly conditions within?
Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.
What caused David to write the Psalm that contains our Golden Text?
Can you apply the text to Nehemiah, and to us?
From what did Paul pray that he might be delivered? Should we so pray?
Who was Sanballat, and before whom did he make a speech?
Who was Tobiah, and what did he say about the work on the walls?
Discuss the prayer of Nehemiah. Can we pray such a prayer? Why?
Who were the Arabians, and why did they oppose the work?
Who were the Ashdodites, and why did they oppose the work?
What tactics did they use in their opposition?
Is it possible for such tactics to be used by brethren in the church?
How did Nehemiah encourage the people?
How did he arouse them to greater activity and perseverance?
What note of patriotism did Nehemiah put in his speech?

Lesson XII—December 19, 1948

THE DEDICATION OF THE WALLS

The Lesson Text

Neh. 12: 22-30

22 As for the Lē'vītes, in the days of Ē-lī'ă-shīb, Joi'ă-dā, and Jo-hā'nan, and Jăd-dū'a, there were recorded the heads of fathers' *houses;* also the priests, in the reign of Dā-rī'ŭs the Pēr'si-ăn.

23 The sons of Lē'vī, heads of fathers' *houses,* were written in the book of the chronicles, even until the days of Jo-hā'nan the son of Ē-lī'ă-shīb.

24 And the chiefs of the Lē'vītes: Hăsh-ă-bī'ăh, Shĕr-ĕ-bī'ăh, and Jĕsh'ū-a the son of Kăd'mī-ēl, with their brethren over against them, to praise and give thanks, according to the commandment of David the man of God, watch next to watch.

25 Măt-tă-nī'ăh, and Băk-bu-kī'ăh, O-bă-dī'ăh, Mē-shŭl'lăm, Tăl'mŏn, Ăk'-kūb, were porters keeping the watch at the store-houses of the gates.

26 These were in the days of Joi'ă-kīm the son of Jĕsh'ū-a, the son of Jōz'ă-dăk, and in the days of Nē-hĕ-mī'ăh the governor, and of Ĕz'rà the priest the scribe.

27 And at the dedication of the wall of Jē-ru'sā-lĕm they sought the Lē'vītes out of all their places, to bring them to Jē-ru'sā-lĕm, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps.
28 And the sons of the singers gathered themselves together, both out of the plain round about Jē-ru'sā-lĕm, and from the villages of the Nē-tŏph'ă-thītes;
29 Also from Bĕth-gĭl'găl, and out of the fields of Gē'bȧ and Āz'mă-vĕth: for the singers had builded them villages round about Jē-ru'sā-lĕm.
30 And the priests and the Lē'vītes purified themselves; and they purified the people, and the gates, and the wall.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them."* (Neh. 9: 20a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Neh. 13: 1-3.

Daily Bible Readings

December 13. M.....Feast of Tabernacles Observed (Neh. 8: 13-18)
December 14. T.....A Review of God's Dealings with Israel (Neh. 9: 5-15)
December 15. W.....The Review (Continued) (Neh. 9: 16-31)
December 16. T.....A Covenant Made to Serve God (Neh. 9: 32-38)
December 17. F.....People Take an Oath to Keep the Law (Neh. 10: 28-39)
December 18. S.....The Dedication Service Described (Neh. 12: 31-47)
December 19. S.....Corrections Made According to the Law (Neh. 13: 1-31)

Lesson Subject Explained

"It only now remained to dedicate with fitting solemnity the city walls—raised amidst so much opposition, with so loyal a devotion. To make the ceremony more imposing, messengers were sent through the land to bring to Jerusalem all the Levites—the ordinary ministers of the temple—the musicians, with their cymbals, harps, lyres, and the singers in the three great divisions. These last had to be summoned from the 'circle' of the Jordan round Jericho, from Netophah, fifteen miles south of Jerusalem, from Beth Gilgal, eighteen miles, and Geba, seven miles north of it, and from Azmaveth, a place now unknown. Open villages had been built by the different choral fraternities in these districts, which lay near enough to Jerusalem to make their periodical attendances in the temple easy. In further preparation for the great event the Levites, now minutely strict in their rites, on their arrival in the holy city, purified not only themselves, but the people, the gates, and the walls, by sacrifices, that no ceremonial shortcomings in the least detail might lessen the sacredness of the proceedings.

"On the appointed day, Nehemiah himself took the lead in the great celebration. The broad top of the walls—built on a scale to allow fighting men to occupy them in case of a siege—was fitly chosen as the scene of an impressive display. Assembling the chiefs of the priestly clans, the Levites, and the people, he marshaled them in two great divisions, which advanced in opposite directions, to meet at the open space of the temple precincts after going around the circuit of the walls. At the head of the one walked Nehemiah, at that of the other Ezra, the two leaders of the community. A great choir giving thanks, and praising and blessing God with songs and melodious music, followed in each procession. The chiefs of the priests, the Levites, and the laity came next—the priestly order in two selected divisions. Then followed other notable laymen of Judah and

Benjamin. Behind these walked two other bodies of priests, blowing the sacred trumpets. Then came a body of Levite singers and musicians, the latter with the instruments known as invented or introduced by David. All marched in their robes and vestments, or festive apparel, filling the air with loud rejoicings, till the two processions met at last in the open space before the temple. There the whole participants in both united in a chorus of praise and thanksgiving, the voices of the singers rising loud and clear above the harps and cymbals. Then followed great sacrifices, offered by the priests on the huge altar before the Holy Place in the Temple, and with this the solemnities closed. The people were beside themselves for joy, their loud cries of gladness filling the air, even to the distant surrounding hills." (Geikie.)

Context of the Lesson

As we have learned in former lessons the walls were completed in fifty-two days. Then some repair work was done on the temple before the time of dedication. It also seems that Nehemiah made a trip to Shushan, some think during the time which elapsed between the sixth and seventh chapters, and that he came back with money to finish the doors, and with authority to provide a watch for the city at all times.

So great had been the danger of living in Jerusalem without walls for their protection that there were very few people living in the city. (Neh. 7: 4.) So a move was started to get people to move into the city. And there seems to be some connection between this move and the gathering of the people to hear the reading of the law as mentioned in chapter 8. But while reading in the book of the law, they found that they were to live for one week in booths made from branches of trees. No sooner did they find it to be a commandment of the law to live in these booths than they complied with the requirement. The time of the reading happened to be the week in which they were to observe the feast of tabernacles—in the seventh month.

Following this they made confession of their sins, giving rather a history of God's dealings with their fathers, and acknowledging the errors of the fathers, and saying that God was just in the punishments he had sent upon them for their sins. And after this confession of sins on the part of themselves and their fathers, they covenanted to keep the law in every particular.

These things being done, they got back to the business of building up the population of Jerusalem, which seems to have been at least discussed sometime before. It was decided that one-tenth of all the people would be required to move into the city limits. There were some who volunteered to move, and the "people blessed all the men that willingly offered themselves to dwell in Jerusalem." (Neh. 11: 2.) There was danger from the enemies, and the means of making a living in the city were not what we find in a modern city, so people who volunteered to move into Jerusalem were to be commended. They cast lots among the rest of the people, and every tenth man was obliged to move into the city. We are then told of the cities round about Jerusalem, and the families who lived in them.

The Historical Background

TIME.—The date of this lesson is 445 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Nehemiah, Ezra, and the people.

Golden Text Explained

"Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them." Our Golden Text is one of several statements concerning the goodness of God to the children of Israel in the wilderness in spite of their sin and rebellion. The pillar of cloud which went with them to show them the way when they traveled, to give them light by night, and to protect them from the scorching rays of the desert sun; and the manna which was given them to eat, and water from the rock to drink; and they lacked nothing, for their clothes waxed not old, and their feet did not swell from the long hard journey. These blessings illustrated the goodness of God, and their sins illustrated the lack of appreciation of the people.

Among these good gifts is listed the Holy Spirit to instruct the people. Moses had the Spirit; and when the seventy were appointed to help him, they were given a portion of the Spirit which Moses had. (Num. 11: 17ff.) So the Holy Spirit was among them as a teacher, helping them instruct the people, and to judge wisely among the people. And people who rebelled against Moses and these seventy men who were selected to help him, they rejected the Spirit. Stephen accused the people of his day of resisting the Holy Spirit just like their fathers before them had done. (Acts 7: 51.) When the people rebelled against the words spoken by Moses, they rebelled against the Spirit, and Isaiah so states. (Isa. 63: 10.)

The Holy Spirit is given in this age to guide us into all truth. (John 16: 13.) He revealed that truth to the apostles. (Eph. 3: 5; Gal. 1: 11, 12.) The apostles have written it for our instruction and guidance. (2 Pet. 3: 1, 2.) When we accept what the apostles wrote, we accept the Spirit's instruction; but when we reject what the inspired men wrote, we reject the teaching of the Holy Spirit. When we reject the Holy Spirit, we reject him who sent the Spirit. (Luke 10: 16.) So no one can reject the writings of inspired men without rejecting Jesus and the Father who sent the Spirit into the world to instruct us.

Many learned men refuse to be baptized because they can see no reason for doing such. They say it is contrary to reason to think that baptism has any connection with the remission of sins, so they refuse to do it. We may admit it is contrary to human reason, but since inspired men wrote the commandment we cannot refuse to do it without rejecting the Holy Spirit and the Father who sent him. The act of baptism is a test of our submission to God and his teaching through inspired men. Others refuse to take the Lord's Supper for about the same reason. But this too is the teaching of the Holy Spirit through the apostles, and no one can refuse to obey that teaching without rejecting both the Holy Spirit and God who sent him into the world to instruct people.

Helps on the Lesson Text

As for the Levites, in the days of . . . Jaddua, "This was probably the high priest who went in his pontifical robes, accompanied by his brethren, to meet Alexander the Great, when he was advancing towards Jerusalem, with the purpose to destroy it, after having conquered Tyre and Gaza. Alexander was struck with the appearance of the priest, that he forebore all hostilities against Jerusalem, prostrated himself before Jaddua, worshiped the Lord at the temple, and granted many privileges to the Jews." (Adam Clarke.)

Written in the book of the chronicles. This was a book of records containing the genealogies of the priests. It does not refer to the books of the Old Testament bearing that name.

To praise and give thanks, according to the commandment of David. This commandment of certain Levites to take care of the praise service is likely the one found in 1 Chron. 25: 1-8. There it is said that certain of the sons of Asaph and Heman, and Jeduthun were to do this work. They were to use all sorts of musical instruments in these praise services. And in 2 Chron. 8: 14 we learn that these Levites were to minister in this office "as the duty of every day required." "And the number of them, with their brethren that were instructed in singing unto Jehovah, even all that were skilful, was two hundred fourscore and eight. And they cast lots for their offices, all alike, as well the small as the great, the teacher as the scholar." Then when Hezekiah made his reforms, we find him setting the Levites in the house of Jehovah with cymbals, etc., according to the commandment of David, Gad, and Nathan, "For the commandment was of Jehovah by his prophets." (2 Chron. 29: 25.) Psalm 150 is devoted to teaching the people to praise God with the instruments common in their day. Was that Psalm written by inspiration? If so, it is not the words of David, but of the Holy Spirit through David. If that Psalm is not inspired, who knows whether any of them are inspired? Yes, David, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and in company with other inspired prophets, commanded the use of musical instruments in the praise of God. But that is no justification for their use in worship in this gospel age. Until those who use them can find where God has spoken unto us through his son (Heb. 1: 1, 2), commanding us to use them in Christian worship in as clear language as he spoke to the Jews through David, Gad, and Nathan to use them in Jewish worship, we may be assured that it is not the will of God for us to use them today.

And at the dedication of the wall. The actual service of dedication is described in verses 31-43 of this chapter. And this lesson opens with a statement of the manner in which the dedication service was conducted. It was made an occasion of great rejoicing.

They sought the Levites out of all their places. Some of the Levites lived in Jerusalem (Neh. 11: 3, 15), but many of them lived in villages around the city. It will be remembered that originally they had no inheritance in the land, but certain cities, forty-eight in number, were given them, six of them being designated as cities of refuge.

To keep the dedication with gladness. According to David's commandment it was the business of the Levites to furnish the music

for such occasions, so they were brought in to perform their services in order that the dedication might be with gladness.

With thanksgivings, and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps. This thanksgiving was different from the singing as the language demands, so it must have consisted of speaking, recounting the goodness of God and giving thanks to him for his goodness. The singing would be of some of the psalms of David, and such as might be composed for this special occasion. There are two kinds of cymbals mentioned, loud and high sounding. (Ps. 150: 5.) "The former consisted of four small plates of brass or some other hard metal; two plates were attached to each hand of the performer, and were smote together to produce a loud noise. The latter consisted of two larger plates, one held in each hand, and struck together as an accompaniment to other instruments." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary.*) The psaltery was an instrument resembling our guitar, only the body of it was somewhat more in the shape of a pear. It had six strings, five of them being double. The harp was a stringed instrument, having from ten to twenty-four strings. Josephus speaks of one with forty-seven strings, but that is thought to be one of his exaggerations.

For the singers had builded them villages. These were Levites who preferred to be out of Jerusalem when not on duty at the temple. And since they worked in courses, as did the priests, they were free of duty while other courses were on duty.

The priests and the Levites purified themselves. There were certain washings and offerings which had to be attended to before priests and Levites were ceremonially fit to perform their duties in their offices before Jehovah. If these things were not attended to they were not allowed to have any part in the services. All wished to be in condition for this big event, so they were sure to attend to their purifications.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Praising God for his goodness is a good topic for this lesson in these classes. Have the children to "count their blessings," naming as many ways as they can in which God is good to children now. Then the teacher can add a few to the list, writing them on the board. Then they can be taught that the singing of certain songs of praise is one way we can, and should, praise God for our blessings. Good songs of praise may be sung in connection with the lesson, for children always enjoy singing. But impress upon them the fact that the singing of these songs is worship, and that they must enter into the singing with gladness in their hearts that they have received so many blessings. Then they can be taught that they have a part in the singing when the church meets for worship.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Dedicating ourselves to God may well be used as a topic in these departments. As Nehemiah dedicated the walls to God, so we should in early life dedicate ourselves to God. Nehemiah dedicated the walls to God because God made it possible for them to build, because the walls were to be used for the protection of God's people, and because

they were to make possible the growth of the city and the use of the temple for the worship of God. These boys and girls should dedicate themselves to God because God created them for his glory, because God has preserved them in good health of mind and body, and because God has endowed them with great mental and physical strength with which to honor him. It is a sin to use for self or for the devil these things God gave us to use for his glory.

Young People and Adult Departments

Purification before dedication is a good thought to stress in these departments. The priests purified themselves, the people, the gates, and the wall before the service of dedication to God. Things, or people, used in the service of God must be pure from defilement. Teachers and officers of a church should keep themselves pure that they may render the best service possible. Churches should be kept pure doctrinally to do the most good. The worship and service must be according to the pattern given by the Holy Spirit. Purity should be the aim of both individuals and congregation; purity in all things.

Topics for Discussion

1. Was David authorized to introduce the use of musical instruments as the Levites were instructed to use them? If so, what did a later prophet mean when he said God would not hear the melody of the viols (Amos 5: 23); and condemned those who invent unto themselves instruments of music like David? (Amos 6: 5.)

2. Granting that David was authorized to introduce them, can you prove by that that we should use them in Christian worship? What do you consider the strongest reason why we should not use them in Christian worship?

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
Describe the formalities of the service of dedication.
Who were the principal characters in this ceremony?
Why was Jerusalem not a popular place to live?
What was done to bring the population of the city up to what it should be?
Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.
Name some ways in which God manifested his goodness towards Israel in the wilderness.
Why was the Spirit given to them, and how did he instruct the people?
How did the people grieve the Spirit, and reject the Spirit?
Why did Jesus send the Holy Spirit to the apostles?
How does the Holy Spirit teach us today, and how can we reject him?
What do you know of Jaddua the high priest?
Discuss the work of the Levites in the praise service according to David's commandment.
Was David inspired when he issued that commandment, and when he wrote Psalm 150?
In what mood was the dedication service conducted?

What is meant by thanksgiving, and singing, cymbals, psalteries, and harps?
Where did many of the singers live, and how did the nature of their work make this possible?
What ceremonies did the priests and Levites attend to before the dedication?
Does this suggest anything to you with reference to our purity when we serve?

Lesson XIII—December 26, 1948

THE MESSAGE OF MALACHI

The Lesson Text

Mal. 3: 7-15

7 From the days of your fathers ye have turned aside from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith Jē-hō'văh of hosts. But ye say, Wherein shall we return?
8 Will a man rob God? yet ye rob me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.
9 Ye are cursed with the curse; for ye rob me, even this whole nation.
10 Bring ye the whole tithe into the store-house, that there may be food in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith Jē-hō'văh of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough *to receive it.*
11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast its fruit before the time in the field, saith Jē-hō'văh of hosts.
12 And all nations shall call you happy; for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith Jē-hō'văh of hosts.
13 Your words have been stout against me, saith Jē-hō'văh. Yet ye say, What have we spoken against thee?
14 Ye have said, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his charge, and that we have walked mournfully before Jē-hō'văh of hosts?
15 And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are built up; yea, they tempt God, and escape.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"*Unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings.*" (Mal. 4: 2.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Mal. 4: 1-6.

Daily Bible Readings

December 20. M.....Jacob Is Loved but Esau Is Hated (Mal. 1: 1-5)
December 21. T.....Priests Rebuked for Polluted Offerings (Mal. 1: 6-14)
December 22. W.....A Commandment for the Priests (Mal. 2: 1-9)
December 23. T.....The Divorce Evil in Israel (Mal. 3: 10-17)
December 24. F.....The Forerunner of Christ Promised (Mal. 3: 1-6)
December 25. S.....The Promise Fulfilled in John (Mark 1: 1-11)
December 26. S.....More About the Promised Forerunner (Matt. 3: 1-12)

Lesson Subject Explained

Of the personal history of Malachi nothing is known, and for that reason traditions are the more plentiful. Jerome says there was a belief current among the Jews to the effect that he was none other than Ezra the scribe. "With equal probability Malachi has been identified with Mordecai, Nehemiah, and Zerubbabel." It is about as difficult to determine the time of his writing. There are some who believe that he was contemporary with Nehemiah, while others think his work was of a later date. In these lessons we have been

following the date given by Adam Clarke in his commentary, which are usually in line with the chronology worked out by Bishop Ussher. However it occurs to the writer that this prophet must have been a contemporary with Nehemiah, and that the date given by Adam Clarke is a little too late. He gives 397 B.C. as the date of the writing of Malachi, and the work of Nehemiah closed several years before that date. Reasons for believing that the work of Malachi was contemporary with that of Nehemiah are given in the following quotation.

"The offences denounced by Malachi as prevailing among the people, and especially the corruption of the priests by marrying foreign wives, correspond with the actual abuses with which Nehemiah had to contend in his efforts to bring about a reformation (compare Mal. 2: 8 with Neh. 13: 29). The alliance of the high priest's family with Tobiah the Ammonite (Neh. 13: 4, 28) and Sanballat the Horonite had introduced neglect of the customary temple-service, and the offerings and the tithes due to the Levites and priests, in consequence of which the temple was forsaken (Neh. 13: 4-13), and the Sabbath openly profaned (id. 15-21). The short interval of Nehemiah's absence from Jerusalem had been sufficient for the growth of these corruptions, and on his return he found it necessary to put them down with a strong hand, and to do over again the work that Ezra had done a few years before. From the striking parallelism between the state of things indicated in Malachi's prophecies and that actually existing on Nehemiah's return from the court of Artaxerxes, it is on all accounts highly probable that the efforts of the secular governor were on this occasion seconded by the preaching of 'Jehovah's messenger,' and that Malachi occupied the same position with regard to the reformation under Nehemiah, which Isaiah held in the time of Hezekiah, and Jeremiah in that of Josiah. The last chapter of canonical Jewish history is the key to the last chapter of its prophecy." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.)

Context of the Lesson

In the context of this lesson it is clear that the covenants which the people made, as mentioned in Neh. 10: 28-39, were either not made in too good faith, or that the religious fervor and zeal in which they were made too soon died out. It was not long until the people were in as bad condition as they were when they began to read the law to see wherein they were sinning. The first to fall under the condemnation of the prophet were the priests. They were in position to know better, hence were less justified in their sins. They were offering polluted bread which was too old for personal use. They offered the lame, sick, and blemished animals in sacrifice to God; the best of the flock they kept for personal use. To these Malachi said, "Cursed be the deceiver, who hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a blemished thing; for I am a great King, saith Jehovah of hosts, and my name is terrible among the Gentiles." (Mal. 1: 14.)

Another evil of Malachi's days was the practice among the men of Israel to put away their Hebrew wives and marry foreign women. (Mal. 2: 10-16.) By comparing this paragraph with that of Neh. 13: 23-27 one can see that Malachi was dealing with exactly the same

condition with which Nehemiah dealt, hence it is likely that they were working together. The prophet said, "Ye cover the altar of Jehovah with tears, with weeping, and with sighing," so Jehovah would not regard their offerings. By putting away their rightful wives they were covering the altar with tears. He further said, "Jehovah hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously, though she is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant . . . For I hate putting away, saith Jehovah." (Mal. 2: 14, 16.) In that age of the world when God allowed them to put away their wives for many causes, God said he hated "putting away." In this age of the world when divorce with intention to remarry is allowed for only one cause, how much more must God hate putting away! It is well to point out in this connection God's attitude towards polygamy as expressed by Malachi. "And did he not make one, although he had the residue of the Spirit? And wherefore one? He sought a godly seed." (Mal. 2: 15.) This refers to the creation; God made one wife for Adam, although he had the residue of the Spirit and could have made many wives. But he made only one, for he sought a godly seed. From this we gather seed from polygamous marriage is not a godly seed.

The prophet then looks to the future, when the Lord shall send his messenger to prepare the way before him; and the Lord, whom they were seeking, would suddenly come to his temple. Notice that the Jehovah speaking was to send his messenger, and that messenger would prepare the way for Jehovah. The messenger was John the Baptist (Mark 1: 2), and the one for whom he prepared the way was Jesus Christ. Therefore Jesus is referred to as Jehovah. His coming to the temple occurred when he cleansed it. (John 2: 13-22; Matt. 20: 12.)

The Historical Background

TIME.—420 to 397 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Malachi, and the people.

Golden Text Explained

"Unto you that fear my name." To fear the name of God is to reverence him as God. To fear Jehovah meant that they would keep his commandments and observe his ordinances. It is about the same as the statement of Jesus, "If a man love me, he will keep my word." (John 14: 23.) Those who feared the name of Jehovah are mentioned in the preceding chapter, verses 16-18. Of them several things are said. (1) They spoke often to one another. They gave that instruction, encouragement, consolation, and correction so often needed by all who are sincerely striving to live godly lives. (2) They thought upon the name of God. Our constant prayer should be that the meditations of our heart may be acceptable to him. (Ps. 19: 14.) To think upon his name is to think of his person, perfections, plan of salvation, and his wonderful providences in the behalf of his children. What could be more fitting and helpful to his children? (3) Jehovah hears those who fear him, and he has a book of remembrance where is kept a record of their deeds, and they shall not be forgotten,

but shall be rewarded abundantly. (4) They shall be Jehovah's in a day that he shall make. The King James version says, "In that day when I make up my jewels." But it perhaps means a day which Jehovah will make for the joy and reward of those who fear him.

"Shall the sun of righteousness arise." Our Golden Text is a prophecy concerning the coming of Jesus Christ. The nation was wrecked on account of sin. When they returned from captivity it seemed they should have been convinced of the unprofitableness of disobedience, but they had hardly settled in Palestine before they began to forget God and his law. The prophets had to stir them up anew often to get them to finish the temple, and build the walls about the city. And even while the building was going on the rich were oppressing the poor, even taking mortgages on their children in exchange for food. They so compromised with the enemies of Jehovah that they housed one of them in the temple. (Neh. 13: 5.) Hope for saving the nation was about gone. They seemed determined to persist in disobedience. Malachi proved to be the last prophet God saw fit to send them to warn them in any further effort to save them from apostasy. But to Malachi there was a brighter day ahead. The sun of righteousness would arise with the power to heal. But even then the healing power would be only for those who fear the name of Jehovah. There is no power to heal or save people who have no fear of God. (Rom. 3: 18.) And perhaps there is no greater need of the human family today than the fear of God.

Helps on the Lesson Text

Ye have turned aside from mine ordinances. This they had done since the days of their fathers. But had the fathers done any better? There was never a time in the history of the Jewish nation when even a majority of the people were truly God-fearing. Nor is it any better today; the majority of people are determined to walk in their own ways. But this is the charge Jehovah brings against his people.

Return unto me, and I will return unto you. This is the offer of God in spite of the charge he has just made. This has always been the attitude of God towards his people. Man has never gone so far, nor sinned so grievously but that God will accept him if only he can and will turn unto God. Some men sin so long that they are not capable of turning to God.

Wherein shall we return? They have so seared their consciences that they cannot see wherein they have departed from God. This is due to the exceeding deceitfulness of sin, and in this lies the great danger of sin.

Will a man rob God? yet ye rob me. And again they ask, Wherein? They felt no consciousness of sin, though they paid not their tithes and offering. For lack of money the priests and Levites deserted the temple to till the soil for a living, so the temple services were no longer kept going. (Neh. 13: 10-12.)

Ye are cursed with the curse. They had turned from his ordinances, and robbed him of that which rightfully belonged to him, hence the curse of God rested upon them. The whole nation was suffering the curse. It is often true that even the righteous suffer

because of the sin of the wicked. There were a few righteous people when the curse of captivity was brought upon the nation, but they suffered the same as the wicked. When national calamities are brought upon people as a curse the good suffer with the evil.

Bring ye the whole tithe into the store-house. This is God's challenge to his peop e. If they will bring in the tithe he will open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing which they will not be able to receive and consume. Is this an indication that the curse mentioned above was the closing of the windows of heaven? and a consequent leanness of blessings? Such had been the case only a few years before. (Hag. 1: 10, 11.) People today live beneath their privileges; they could have greater blessings if only they would do more for the Lord. Give, and it shall be given unto you. (Luke 6: 38.) He that sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully. (2 Cor. 9: 6.) Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and the temporal things of life will be provided. (Matt. 6: 28-33.) Those who are willing to do right and trust God for what they need never lose.

I will rebuke the devourer. On the condition that they would return to God, the devourer would be rebuked, and caused to cease from destroying the fruit of the ground. This suggests something more with reference to the curse. Neither would the vine cast its fruit before it was ripe. This is another part of the curse mentioned above, and from which the few righteous in the land suffered along with, and on account of, the wicked.

All nations shall call you happy. This was still conditioned on their return to the Lord. Some think that if Israel will yet turn to the Lord that they will be a happy and prosperous nation in a "delightsome land." But the Jews rejected this offer, and they rejected the Christ. For this sin they were destroyed as a nation. Though they are a distinct people, yet they are not a nation; therefore no national promises are held out to them. A national promise cannot be accepted by an individual. The promise of salvation is not a national promise, and if every Jew on earth were to accept salvation on the terms of the gospel, they would have to do it as individuals; it would not be a national salvation in fulfillment of a national promise.

It is vain to serve God. This was the attitude of the people. They had decided that there was nothing to be gained by serving God. Too many people today feel the same way. If God would pay them a big salary in cash, they would see some reason for going to church and living godly lives. They can appreciate cash, bonds, and real estate, but they have no sense of appreciation of spiritual values.

What profit is it . . . that we have walked mournfully before Jehovah? Mourning for sins and turning away from them they declared to be of no profit. Such a course of life they said to be of no advantage. So the proud and haughty, not the meek and humble, were happy; the disobedient, not the submissive, were strong; and those who tempt, or defy, God escape. There is no danger, they said, in disobedience and rebellion. No wonder God ceased to send prophets to warn them and plead with them to return to him.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

God's way is the way of happiness. God promised these Jews if they would return to him all nations would call them happy. This is God's recipe for happiness. Boys and girls wish to be happy in life. They can have their wish fulfilled if they will give heed to what the Lord says about how to be happy. Long life is promised to those who obey their parents. (Eph. 6: 1-3.) And here happiness is promised to the obedient. So a long happy life is within the reach of all these boys and girls. There are other matters to take into consideration, but these are promises made and, other things being favorable, can be relied on.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Is it vain to serve God? In these departments some are apt to be skeptical on the profitableness of serving God. They may think there is an advantage in being liberal and broad-minded. They see the wicked prosper, and many of the righteous are poor. If this problem gave David concern, it is likely to be a prob'em difficult for these young people to solve readily. But it depends on whether we appreciate spiritual values, or whether we have a sense of appreciation for physical values only. Those who consider nothing of value but that which can be put up as col'ateral at the bank will find it difficult to realize the value of serving God. But those who appreciate spiritual values will recognize that it pays to serve God. Developing such an appreciation in these boys and girls is the first and greatest duty of the teacher.

Young People and Adult Departments

Am I robbing God? This question should receive constant attention from all of us. (1) I may rob God of money by not giving as I am prospered. We are to give liberally, even making a sacrifice. To use money for pleasure, and the satisfying of physical appetites beyond what is needful for the body takes money which might be used for God. (2) I may rob God of time which should be used in his service. To much time spent in pleasure and recreation will rob God of time we should spend in visiting the sick and wayward. (3) We rob God when we miss an opportunity to worship. To stay at home Sunday night when we could and should go robs him of our presence and praise, and robs men of our good examples.

Topics for Discussion

1. The depravity of man is very noticeable in these lessons. God did everything short of compulsion to get the Jews to love and serve him; but they were as determined not to reverence him, even reaching the point where they said it was vain to serve God. If man thus goes away from God in spite of his goodness, what would he do without continual manifestations of his love? and continual reminders in sermons and songs of his goodness?

2. From the lessons of this quarter we should have learned that the way of the Lord is always right, and true success is to be enjoyed

only by walking in his ways. Can we say with David, "I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right?"

Questions for the Class

What is the Golden Text of this lesson?
What did you get from the Devotional Reading?
What did you learn from the daily Bible readings?
What reasons are given for thinking Malachi contemporary with Nehemiah?
How long did the people keep their covenants made under Nehemiah?
Whom did Malachi condemn first, and for what?
For what did Malachi condemn the Jewish husbands?
What was God's attitude toward divorce then, and what is it now?
What do we have in the context with reference to the future?
Discuss the time, place, and persons of this lesson.
What is meant by fearing Jehovah?
What four things are said of those who fear Jehovah?
To whom did Malachi look for healing from the sins he condemned in the people?
What charges did Malachi make against the people, and what offer did God make the people?
What question shows how their conscience was seared?
With what were they cursed, and on what condition did God promise to remove it?
Is this promise still held out to national Israel?
What did the people say about serving God?
What did they say about mourning for sins and turning from them?
Was it worth while for God to send other prophets, and did he send others to these people?